

The End Has Come For Delegation of Services Agreements (DSA), Protocols and Formularies

By PA Bob Miller; Chair, Professional Practice Committee

The new statutes provided by the passing of SB 697 (Caballero) have gone a long way in bringing the PA Practice Act more in line with current capabilities of PAs practicing in California. Laws and regulations, initially established in the '70s for a fledging, new and untested profession, were important to give our young profession structure and direction. Several decades of advances in PA education and training have evolved the profession into producing very high-quality healthcare professionals. However, California laws and regulations for PA practice have not kept pace with the continuing advances and the professional standards of healthcare delivery by PAs.

Until now, every medical service provided by a PA required delegated authority from a supervising physician in a written document, which came to be known as the Delegation of Services Agreement (DSA). As a result of SB 697, the DSA will no longer be required by law. Instead the *Practice Agreement* is a written document, developed through collaboration among one or more physicians and surgeons *at the practice* and one or more PAs, that defines the medical services the PAs are authorized to perform *in that particular practice*. No longer is the section of regulations entitled:

Medical Services Performable limiting, and no longer are the medical services you provide “delegated.” **You own your scope.** It is no longer necessary to couple the services you are competent and capable to provide with one particular supervising physician. Your *Practice Agreement* is literally an agreement “with the practice.”

Additionally, the law will no longer require protocols and formularies, which were mandated to specify practice-specific criteria for the use of a particular drug or device and any contradictions for the selection. Currently, the majority of PAs in California also function under protocols governing diagnosis and management as well as medical procedures. Currently, protocols are to be developed by the supervising physician or adopted from, or referenced to, texts or other sources and are signed by both the physician and PA.

Please note, if a practice is not administratively prepared for a *Practice Agreement* on January 1, 2020, a DSA established and signed by the PA and physician supervisor prior to December 31, 2019 will satisfy the requirement. New hires to a practice after January 1, 2020 must have a *Practice Agreement* in place.