

Paramedics/Emergency Medical Technicians

Number: INFORMAL

Date: September 04, 1997

Mr. James H. Peterson III
General Counsel
Florida Department of Health
1317 Winewood Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Dear Mr. Peterson:

You ask under what circumstances paramedics or emergency medical technicians (EMT) may provide health care services, such as blood pressure screenings and immunizations.

You have advised this office that an expanded role of providing health care services by EMTs and paramedics was encouraged in a 1994 memorandum from the Department of Health's predecessor, the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services. You state that over the last few years EMTs have provided blood pressure screenings at local fire stations and that paramedics have given immunizations at some county health departments with no reported adverse health effects to those receiving the services.

These limited roles, when performed under the direct supervision and responsibility of a licensed physician, are consistent with those duties permitted to be performed by medical assistants under section 458.3485, Florida Statutes, as amended by section 28, Chapter 97-264, Laws of Florida. Subsection 2 of the statute authorizes a medical assistant under the direct supervision and responsibility of a licensed physician to, among other things, take vital signs and perform venipunctures and nonintravenous injections.

The Department of Health has not adopted a rule, issued a declaratory statement, or otherwise initiated enforcement proceedings to prohibit EMTs or paramedics with proper training and under the direct supervision and responsibility of a licensed physician from performing the limited services contemplated by section 458.3485, Florida Statutes, as amended.

Accordingly, EMTs or paramedics with proper training and under the direct supervision and responsibility of a licensed physician may perform the limited services contemplated by section 458.3485, Florida Statutes, as amended. The department, however, may wish to seek clarifying legislation on this issue.

Sincerely,

Joslyn Wilson
Assistant Attorney General
Director, Opinions Division

JW/tzg