



RESPIRATORY CARE BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

3750 Rosin Court, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95834

T: (916) 999-2190 • F: (916) 263-7311 • W: www.rcb.ca.gov

SCOPE OF PRACTICE DEFINED

[Business and Professions Code section 3702:](#)

(a) Respiratory care as a practice means a health care profession employed under the of a medical director in the therapy, management, rehabilitation, diagnostic evaluation, and care of patients with deficiencies and abnormalities which affect the pulmonary system and associated aspects of cardiopulmonary and other systems functions, and includes all of the following:

(1) Direct and indirect pulmonary care services that are safe, aseptic, preventive, and restorative to the patient.

(2) Direct and indirect respiratory care services, including, but not limited to, the administration of pharmacological and diagnostic and therapeutic agents related to respiratory care procedures necessary to implement a treatment, disease prevention, pulmonary rehabilitative, or diagnostic regimen prescribed by a physician and surgeon.

(3) Observation and monitoring of signs and symptoms, general behavior, general physical response to respiratory care treatment and diagnostic testing and (A) determination of whether such signs, symptoms, reactions, behavior, or general response exhibits abnormal characteristics; (B) implementation based on observed abnormalities of appropriate reporting or referral or respiratory care protocols, or changes in treatment regimen, pursuant to a prescription by a physician and surgeon or the initiation of emergency procedures.

(4) The diagnostic and therapeutic use of any of the following, in accordance with the prescription of a physician and surgeon: administration of medical gases, exclusive of general anesthesia; aerosols; humidification; environmental control systems and baromedical therapy; pharmacologic agents related to respiratory care procedures; mechanical or physiological ventilatory support; bronchopulmonary hygiene; cardiopulmonary resuscitation; maintenance of the natural airways; insertion without cutting tissues and maintenance of artificial airways; diagnostic and testing techniques required for implementation of respiratory care protocols; collection of specimens of blood; collection of specimens from the respiratory tract; analysis of blood gases and respiratory secretions.

(5) The transcription and implementation of the written and verbal orders of a physician and surgeon pertaining to the practice of respiratory care.

(b) As used in this section, the following apply:

(1) "Associated aspects of cardiopulmonary and other systems functions" includes patients with deficiencies and abnormalities affecting the heart and cardiovascular system.

(2) "Respiratory care protocols" means policies and protocols developed by a licensed health facility through collaboration, when appropriate, with administrators, physicians and surgeons, registered nurses, physical therapists, respiratory care practitioners, and other licensed health care practitioners.



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SCOPE OF PRACTICE DEFINED (continued)

[Business and Professions Code section 3702.7:](#)

The respiratory care practice is further defined and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) Mechanical or physiological ventilatory support as used in paragraph (4) of subdivision (a) of Section 3702 includes, but is not limited to, any system, procedure, machine, catheter, equipment, or other device used in whole or in part, to provide ventilatory or oxygenating support.
- (b) Administration of medical gases and pharmacological agents for the purpose of inducing conscious or deep sedation under physician and surgeon supervision and the direct orders of the physician and surgeon performing the procedure.
- (c) All forms of extracorporeal life support, including, but not limited to, extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) and extracorporeal carbon dioxide removal (ECCO2R).
- (d) Educating students, health care professionals, or consumers about respiratory care, including, but not limited to, education of respiratory core courses or clinical instruction provided as part of a respiratory educational program and educating health care professionals or consumers about the operation or application of respiratory care equipment and appliances.
- (e) The treatment, management, diagnostic testing, control, education, and care of patients with sleep and wake disorders as provided in Chapter 7.8 (commencing with Section 3575).

If you have further questions or need clarification regarding the scope of practice for a respiratory care practitioner, you may call the Board toll free at (866) 375-0386 or send your question by email to rcbinfo@dca.ca.gov.