

Georgia Composite Medical Board

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GCMB Position Paper

RE: Physician Scope of Practice

Physicians who are licensed in Georgia are granted statutory authority to practice medicine and surgery by the Georgia Composite Medical Board. Some physicians may wish to perform new procedures, use new technologies, or migrate into areas of practice for which they have not received formal graduate medical education.

The Board recognizes that medicine is a dynamic field that continues to evolve along with individual practices. Economic pressures, business opportunities, lifestyle considerations, and access to care are all reasons that physicians move into new areas of practice.

However patient harm can occur when physicians practicing outside areas in which they were trained are unable to meet accepted and prevailing standards of care in the new practice area. The informed, prudent care of patients begins with adequate training and the selection of appropriate patients. The ability to identify and manage complications is paramount, as is the provision of timely follow up care. Physicians intending to expand their practice to an area outside their graduate medical education should ensure that they have acquired the appropriate level of education and training. For surgical procedures, this should include proctoring by an individual with proven expertise in the procedure.

The physician's goal should always be to provide the best and reasonable care to patients based on knowledge and experience. It is the Board's position that all physicians, irrespective of their training, will be held to current available and prevailing standards of care. Physicians who chose to perform surgical procedures outside of a hospital operating room or accredited outpatient surgery center should adhere to the Georgia Composite Medical Board's Guidelines for Outpatient Anesthesia and Surgery.

It may also be prudent for physicians to confirm that their liability insurance provides coverage for the procedures they intend to perform.