

**Department Of Health
MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMISSION
Washington State**

Policy/Procedure

Title:	Investigation of Physician Assistants and Sponsoring or Supervising Physicians	Number: MD2011-01
Contact:	James H. Smith, Chief Investigator (360) 236-2770	
Effective Date:	March 4, 2011	
Supersedes	None	
Approved	Leslie M. Burger, MD, FACP, Chair (signature on file)	

BACKGROUND:

The Commission investigates complaints against physicians licensed under RCW 18.71 and physician assistants licensed under RCW 18.71A. When the Commission receives a complaint against a physician assistant, it is important that the Commission obtain all the relevant information concerning the physician-physician assistant relationship.

PROCEDURE:

1. The Commission receives a complaint against a physician assistant.
2. The Medical Consultant reviews the complaint and prepares a memo summarizing the complaint.
3. At the weekly case management team meeting, a panel of the Commission reviews the complaint and decides whether to authorize an investigation of the complaint. The panel may also decide at this time to authorize an investigation of the sponsoring or supervising physician.
4. If the complaint involves sexual misconduct but does not involve clinical expertise or standard of care issues, the Commission refers the complaint to the Secretary, per Commission policy "Referral of Sexual Misconduct Cases," MD2008-08.
5. If the Commission panel authorizes an investigation of the physician assistant, Commission staff will place into the file:
 - a. The Practice Arrangement Plan;
 - b. The name, date of birth and training history of the sponsoring or

- supervising physician;
- d. The AMA profile of the sponsoring or supervising physician;
- e. A summary of prior cases involving the sponsoring or supervising physician;
- f. The number of physician assistants sponsored or supervised by the physician.

6. If the Commission authorized an investigation of the physician assistant, *but not the sponsoring or supervising physician*, the investigator will contact the sponsoring or supervising physician to alert the physician of the complaint, ask the physician about the complaint, and discover other relevant information about the physician assistant.

7. At any point during the investigation of the physician assistant, or at the conclusion of the investigation of the physician assistant, Commission staff may ask the Commission to authorize an investigation of the sponsoring or supervising physician. If the Commission authorizes an investigation of the sponsoring or supervising physician, an investigator will conduct an investigation of the physician into issues identified by the Commission.