



## Scope of Practice

Scope of practice policies are regulatory provisions which specify the activities and conditions under which a licensed health professional may practice. These policies are determined for licensed health professions at the state level through laws and regulations (see [Level of Occupational Regulation](#) for additional details).

Because they define the specific activities and conditions under which a licensed healthcare professional may practice, scope of practice policies have a significant influence on a state's health workforce and healthcare delivery system.

### **What is the role of the Governor in the scope of practice for health professionals?**

1. State licensing entities/boards develop and implement rules, including those related to scope of practice, as authorized through legislation. Governors are able to influence rules through appointment of licensing agency leadership or licensing board members.
2. Governors may issue Executive Orders to modify scope of practice for health professionals. This was common during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many Governors issued orders which directly impacted the scope of practice for health professionals. Orders included authorizing reinstatement of licenses for retired health professionals, enabling health professionals to administer immunizations, permitting expanded telehealth services, and recognizing out-of-state licenses. For example, Indiana [Executive Order 20-05](#) permitted out of state health care providers to practice in Indiana without an Indiana license. There are numerous instances where temporary orders related to health professional scope of practice issued by the Governor have been made permanent through legislation.
3. Governors may include scope of practice related initiatives in executive legislative platforms or through legislative proposals.

## Resources

- [Scope of Practice.org](https://www.scopeofpractice.org/) is a website maintained by the National Council of State Legislatures that provides a 50-State Scope of Practice Landscape for Behavioral Health Providers, Nurse Practitioners, Optometrists, Oral Health Providers, Pharmacists, and Physician Assistants.
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials has a Scope of Practice Toolkit <https://www.astho.org/advocacy/state-health-policy/legal-preparedness-series/scope-of-practice-toolkit/> but it is from 2012
- Profession Specific
  - American Association of Nurse Practitioners <https://www.aanp.org/advocacy/state/state-practice-environment>
  - American Association of Medical Assistants <https://www.aama-ntl.org/employers/state-scope-of-practice-laws>
  - American Medical Association has Scope of Practice resources and tools, but some are limited to members only <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/scope-practice/scope-practice-key-tools-resources>
  - NCSBN has a scope of practice decision making framework <https://www.ncsbn.org/decision-making-framework.htm>