AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF Pathologists' Assistants

AAPA Tenets on State Licensure

The American Association of Pathologists' Assistants (AAPA) asserts that both NAACLS program-trained Pathologists' Assistants and those who were grandfathered through on-the-job training prior to 2010—who successfully pass the ASCP-BOC Pathologists' Assistant Certification Examination—are qualified as competent mid-level practitioners in anatomic pathology.

The AAPA advocates for state licensure to ensure that anatomic pathology services are performed with an adequate level of professional competence. This licensure should establish appropriate entry-level qualifications for Pathologists' Assistants, including training, experience, and certification that confirm their capability to perform essential functions.

The AAPA recommends that minimum requirements for licensure include:

- Graduation from a NAACLS-accredited Pathologists' Assistant training program, or, for those trained prior to 2010, on-the-job training
- Successful passage of the ASCP-BOC Pathologists' Assistant Certification Examination by both NAACLS-accredited program graduates and grandfathered on-the-job trained Pathologists' Assistants prior to 2010.
- Earning 60 continuing education credits every three years (an increase from 45 credits effective January 1, 2022) to maintain certification as required by the ASCP-BOC Credential Maintenance Program.

The AAPA believes that establishing appropriately stringent competency requirements through licensure will enhance the health and safety of patients. Additionally, state licensure provides a crucial legal framework to restrict incompetent practitioners from delivering anatomic pathology services to the public.

It is essential to define Pathologists' Assistant qualifications, certification, and scope of practice within state statutes to exclude those who have not met the necessary requisites for licensure. Furthermore, the AAPA advocates that licensure renewal should require documentation of continuing education as a means to demonstrate ongoing competence.
The AAPA calls for the implementation of these licensure requirements to ensure the integrity of the profession and the safety of the public