

# Tennessee Law Now Allows for Licensure and Employment of Anesthesiologist Assistants

On May 21, 2025, Governor Bill Lee signed House Bill No. 979 (the Bill) into law. In addition to amending laws regarding the employment of Hospital-Based Physicians (see [this article](#)), the Bill also introduces a new provider type that may now be licensed under Tennessee law: anesthesiologist assistants (AAs). This update provides an overview of the requirements set forth in the Bill concerning AAs, which will become effective on January 1, 2026.

The Bill grants the Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners (the Board) oversight of the application and licensing process for becoming an AA, subject to the requirements laid out below. The Board will oversee the approval and denial process for licensure, setting and collecting licensure fees, establishing continuing education requirements, investigating grounds for revocation of licensure, and adopting rules governing both the licensure and practice of AAs.

The Bill grants the authority to the Board to license AAs who have: (1) graduated from an AA program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs; (2) passed a certification examination administered by the National Commission for the Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants or another national certifying agency approved by the Board of Medical Examiners; and (3) completed an application form and paid the required application and licensing fees prescribed by the Board. House Bill No. 979 also prescribes a process for the Board to issue temporary licenses or to reinstate lapsed licenses.

The Bill provides scope of practice rules for AAs as well. AAs must have a supervisory agreement in place with their supervising anesthesiologist and must maintain a copy of the agreement at all practice locations. Additionally, AAs must be supervised by an anesthesiologist, and in cases where AAs are assisting in the delivery of medical care, the supervising anesthesiologist must be immediately available to intervene if necessary. AAs can only perform duties and responsibilities assigned to the AA by their supervising anesthesiologist, and the AA's practice must not exceed their own education and training nor the scope of practice of the AA's supervising anesthesiologist.

For anesthesiologists looking to employ AAs after House Bill No. 979 takes effect, it is important to verify that applicants have been licensed in accordance with the requirements set forth above. It will be considered a Class B misdemeanor if an anesthesiologist employs an individual who has not been properly licensed. Each offense of employing an individual who has not been properly licensed could carry fines up to \$1,000, imprisonment of up to one year, or both.

The full text of the Bill, as signed by Gov. Bill Lee, can be found [here](#). Regulations governing the practice and licensure of AAs are forthcoming from the Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners.

These changes mark a significant development in the field of anesthesiology in the State of Tennessee. Medical institutions and professionals that utilize anesthesia should carefully consider the implications on operational practices, staffing arrangements, and compliance with the new legal framework.

Our [health care attorneys](#) are prepared to assist hospitals and anesthesiology groups in navigating the new requirements. Please contact [Louis Metcalfe](#) or your relationship attorney at Chambliss for further consultation on how the Bill may impact your organization's operations and compliance strategies.

Chambliss, Bahner & Stophel, P.C. continues to monitor these developments and will provide further guidance as needed.