

**South Carolina**  
**Title 40 - Professions and Occupations**  
**CHAPTER 47.**  
**PHYSICIANS, SURGEONS AND OSTEOPATHS**  
**ARTICLE 5.**  
**RESPIRATORY CARE**

- **Respiratory Care Practice Act contains exemption language**

SECTION 40-47-500. Short title.

This article is known and may be cited as the "South Carolina Respiratory Care Practice Act".

**SECTION 40-47-510. Definitions.**

As used in this article:

- (1) "Board" means the Board of Medical Examiners of South Carolina.
- (2) "Committee" means the Respiratory Care Committee which is established by this article as an advisory committee responsible to the board.
- (3) "Respiratory care or respiratory therapy" means the allied health profession or specialty which provides educational, therapeutic, or diagnostic procedures utilized in the prevention, detection, and management of deficiencies or abnormalities, or both, of the cardiopulmonary systems.
- (4) "Practice of respiratory care" may include, but is not limited to, the administration of pharmacologic, diagnostic, and therapeutic agents related to respiratory care procedures necessary to implement a treatment, disease prevention, pulmonary rehabilitative, or diagnostic regimen prescribed by a physician; transcription and implementation of written or verbal orders of a physician pertaining to the practice of respiratory care; observing and monitoring the signs and symptoms, general behavior, general physical response to respiratory care treatment and diagnostic testing including determination of whether such signs, symptoms, reactions, behavior, or general response exhibit abnormal characteristics and implementation, based on observed abnormalities or appropriate reporting, referral, respiratory care protocols or changes in treatment pursuant to the written or verbal orders of a person licensed to practice medicine under the laws of this State; or the initiation of emergency procedures under the regulations of the board or as otherwise permitted in this article. The practice of respiratory care may be performed in a clinic, hospital, skilled nursing facility, private dwelling, or other place considered appropriate or necessary by the board in accordance with the written or verbal order of a physician and must be performed under a qualified medical director.

(5) "Respiratory care practitioner" means a respiratory therapist or a respiratory therapy technician licensed to practice respiratory therapy who is a graduate of a school for respiratory therapy approved by the American Medical Association or a successor accrediting authority recognized as such by the board.

(6) "Medical director" means a physician licensed to practice medicine in South Carolina who has special interest and knowledge in the diagnosis, treatment, and assessment of respiratory problems. The practice of respiratory care or respiratory therapy must occur under the supervision of a qualified medical director. In the home care of cardiopulmonary patients, the existence of qualified physician sponsorship must be submitted and documented to the committee and approved by the board.

#### **SECTION 40-47-520. Licensing requirement.**

Individuals practicing as respiratory therapists and respiratory therapy technicians employed to provide respiratory therapy procedures for inpatients, outpatients, and home patients must be licensed in accordance with this article.

#### **SECTION 40-47-530. Persons not subject to provisions of this article.**

(A) This article does not affect:

(1) a person employed to provide respiratory care by the United States government if the person provides respiratory care solely under the direction or control of the organization by which the person is employed;

(2) a person actively pursuing a course of study leading to a degree or certificate in respiratory therapy in a program accredited by the American Medical Association or a successor accrediting authority recognized as such by the board if the activities and services constitute a part of a supervised course of study and if the person is designated by a title which clearly indicates the status of student;

**(3) an individual or other health care professional who is licensed by the State or who has proven competency in one or more of the functions included in the definition of the practice of respiratory care as long as the person does not represent himself as a respiratory care practitioner. As it relates to respiratory care, individuals exempt pursuant to this section must provide proof of formal training for these functions which includes an evaluation of competence through a mechanism that is determined by the board and the committee to be both valid and reliable. The clinical assessment of artificial pressure adjuncts to the respiratory system may not be performed by any other person without proof of formal training and exemption by the board.**

(4) a respiratory therapy student, active and in good standing, who may be employed and works under the direct supervision of a respiratory care practitioner and practices to the person's level of proven clinical competency as certified by a program approved by the

American Medical Association or a successor accrediting authority recognized as such by the board;

(5) employees of durable medical equipment companies delivering and setting up respiratory equipment in an individual's home, pursuant to a written prescription by a physician, except that any instructions to the patient regarding the clinical use of the equipment, any patient monitoring, patient assessment or other procedures designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment must be performed by a licensed respiratory care practitioner or other individual who is exempt by statute or regulation.

(B) Nothing in this article is intended to limit, preclude, or otherwise interfere with the practice of other persons and health providers formally trained and licensed by the appropriate agencies of this State.

### Regulatory Language

#### CHAPTER 81.

### DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION-- STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

#### ARTICLE 11.

#### RESPIRATORY CARE PRACTITIONER

81-203. Competency Requirements for the Provision of Respiratory Care by Non-RCPs.

(1) Non-RCP's providing respiratory care, regardless of care setting or demographics, shall successfully complete formal training and demonstrate initial competency prior to assuming those duties. Formal training is defined as a supervised, deliberate and systematic continuing educational activity intended to develop new proficiencies with an application in mind. Formal training shall be approved by the board and include supervised didactic, laboratory and clinical activities as well as documentation of competence through a post- testing mechanism. Qualifications of the faculty and educational program must be approved by the medical director. The board must be notified of the intent to medically delegate the practice of respiratory care to non-RCP's prior to implementation of the program or practice.

(2) Certified Nurse Anesthetists and Certified Paramedical and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) are exempt from this regulation so long as they are certified or licensed by the State and do not hold themselves out as respiratory care practitioners or practice respiratory care.

**(3) Registered Polysomnographic Technologists (RPSGT's) practicing in an accredited sleep medicine facility are exempt from this regulation so long as they are practicing under physician direction and do not hold themselves out as respiratory care practitioners or practice respiratory care.**