SPECIAL ALERT: MEDICAL ASSISTANTS WHO ADMINISTER MEDICATIONS MUST BE REGISTERED WITH THE STATE

The NMA has recently learned of an issue that affects all physicians who use medical assistants to give injections or other medications to patients. Under Nebraska law, anyone who administers medications as a part of their job must be registered as a Medication Aide, if he or she is not licensed or certified by the state as a nurse or other health care provider.   This includes all medical assistants who are employed by physicians, regardless of whether they are nationally certified or have graduated from an accredited medical assistant program.

To register as a Medication Aide, a medical assistant must demonstrate minimum competencies, including knowledge of the "5 rights": getting the *right* drug to the *right* recipient in the *right* dosage by the *right* route at the *right* time. Training may be provided by a physician or other licensed health care professional.

Many physicians and office managers are unaware that their medical assistants need to register as Medication Aides or have been told erroneously that they are not required to register. In some instances, medical assistants who have been registered as Medication Aides have allowed their registrations to lapse due to incorrect information about their need to register. DHHS has set up a special registration procedure for those medical assistants who have allowed their Medication Aide registrations to lapse.

All physicians should review their practices to be certain that employees who are administering medications are registered as Medication Aides, if they are not otherwise licensed as health care professionals. Information about the Medication Aide requirements and an on-line application is available at:

http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/crl_nursing_ma_ma.aspx#Procedures