

Chapter 6

Physician Assistants

6-1. Description of duties. Plans, organizes, performs, and supervises troop medical care at Levels I and II. Directs services, teaches and trains enlisted medics, and performs as medical platoon leader or officer in charge in designated units. Manages subordinate personnel, facilities, and equipment required to operate troop clinics or other medical activities and organizations. Functions as special staff officer to the commanders, advising on medically related matters pertinent to unit readiness and unit mission. Participates in the delivery of health care to all categories of patients and to all eligible beneficiaries. Prescribes courses of treatment and medication when required, and consistent with his capabilities and credentials. Interprets information in health records for application to current conditions and makes entries into the health record as a primary care provider. Orders diagnostic X-ray and laboratory procedures and writes consultations to specialty clinics and for ancillary services as appropriate. In the absence of a physician, the physician assistant will be the primary source of advice to determine the medical necessity, priority, and requirements for patient evaluation, and initial emergency care and stabilization. Supervises preparation of reports pertaining to medical activities. Functions as medical staff officer at battalion, brigade, division, corps, major command (MACOM), and at DA level activities, advising the surgeon of the respective command and the Commander on medical matters. Functions as primary instructor and staff officer at the Academy of Health Sciences. After formal military and/or civilian schooling performs duties under the supervision of a physician in selected specialties. Functions as the primary medical officer reviewing and supervising the medical examinations of individuals in the personnel reliability program.

6-2. Roles in Humanitarian Missions.

a. Education. A certified medical professional uniquely qualified to provide health education and educational support to unit commanders, medical personnel of HN and allied forces, the HN population, and non-governmental organizations. The physician assistant provides education on health promotion and wellness, fitness and field sanitation principles.

b. Consulting. Serve as a primary medical authority to his/her supporting unit on pre- and post-deployment readiness, operational medicine, field preventive medicine, and stress management.

c. Administration. Serve as the supporting unit's primary medical leader and special staff officer.

6-3. Operations Physician Assistants Can Support.

a. Noncombat Evacuation Operation (NEO). Initial medical authority/team leader provides triage and treatment, assesses the medical threat, provides initial and limited Class

VIII supplies, provides limited preventive medicine services, assesses routes of evacuation, and coordinates with higher HN medical authorities and services.

b. Domestic Support Operations – Disaster Assistance. Initial medical authority/team leader serves to provide triage and treatment, assesses the medical threat, provides initial and limited Class VIII supplies, provides initial limited preventive medicine services, assesses routes of evacuation, coordinates with local community medical authorities, supports medical distribution (Hubs) centers, and augments the local community medical system.

c. Domestic Support Operations – Community Assistance. Coordinate with local community medical authorities, supports medical distribution (Hubs) centers, and augments the local community medical system. Provide rescue teams and extrication assistance, provides resuscitation and evacuation at the problem area and acts as a medical liaison for Task Force.

d. Domestic Support Operations – Environmental Assistance. Provide Echelon 1 and limited Echelon 2 medical support to HAZMAT personnel and site victims. Coordinate and assist with mental health support.

e. Domestic Support Operations – Law Enforcement Support. Provide Echelon 1 and limited Echelon 2 support near the disturbance site. Advise the commander on possible medical threat scenarios of mass destruction, provide health education on universal precautions and provide necessary chemoprophylaxis.

f. Foreign Humanitarian Assistance. Same as NEO and domestic support operations.

g. Security Assistance. Serve as an educator on universal precautions, assess the medical threat, and provide medical education. Provide Echelon 1 and limited Echelon 2 support near the disturbance site. Advise the commander on possible medical threat scenarios of mass destruction.

h. Nation Assistance. Coordinate with HN health care team and provide general health assessment.

i. Combating Terrorism. Serve as a medical support planner, advise the command on the medical threat, provide contingency planning, and provide input into the military intelligence process.

j. Peace Support Operations. Serve as a force multiplier to the peacekeeping task force. Supports peacetime and continuous health systems, provide pre- and post- deployment medical planning, follow up on injuries and illnesses from deployments, and provide stress management to the task force.

k. Show of Force. Support the health care system.

l. Support for Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies. Provide medical and limited preventive medicine services to the domestic population.

m. Attacks and Raids. Provide Echelon 1 and limited Echelon 2 medical care to allied forces and EPW under such conditions. Subject matter expert in the mission planning on all aspect of medical care before, during, and after the mission. Instrumental in providing acute trauma management training to assigned medical personnel and conducting cross training to all others.

6-4. Physician Assistant Training Opportunities.

- a. Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS)
- b. Operational and Emergency Medicine Skills Course
- c. Tropical Medicine course
- d. Global Medicine course
- e. Wilderness Medicine course
- f. Medical Management of Chemical Casualties Course
- g. Principles of Military Preventive Medicine Course (6AF5)
- h. Emergency Medicine Basic Skills Course
- i. Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)
- j. Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)
- k. Emergency Medicine residency program
- l. Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center training
- m. Joint Medical Planners course

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