



State of California
Respiratory Care Board
444 North 3rd Street, Suite 270
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone (916) 323-9983
Fax (916) 323-9999
www.rcb.ca.gov



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Inquiry:

Our hospital is potentially exploring the use of Respiratory Therapists in performing bronchopulmonary hygiene on ventilator-assisted patients by using Bronchoscopy. I am unable to locate on the Respiratory Care Board website specifically if it is within the scope of practice for a Respiratory Therapist, under the medical staff supervision, to do the following:

Bronchoscopy, for the purpose of secretion removal

If you could please point me to where I may find this in the Respiratory Care Practice Act and/or any other resources I may use for research.

Response:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the use of bronchopulmonary hygiene. The Board has the following comment regarding your inquiry:

There is significant clinical evidence that suggests that routine bronchopulmonary hygiene performed by bronchoscopy improves gas exchange and reduces ventilator days in the acute care setting. Using this technique as a therapeutic modality by a licensed respiratory care practitioner is definitely within their scope of practice as long as the procedure does not include any tissue biopsies and the practitioner performing the procedure has had appropriate training and competency validation by the medical director for respiratory care or another appropriate medical staff component.

Thank you for your inquiry. Should you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Officer of the Respiratory Care Board.

Reference #: 2004-C-34