

Protect patients with physician-led care at medical spas

Medical spas or “med spas” provide medical procedures, including neuromodulators, dermal fillers and laser procedures, outside the doctor’s office. While there are many safe, physician-owned medical spas, a lack of regulation and enforcement has enabled a large number of inadequately trained or unsupervised practitioners to provide cosmetic medical procedures in medical spas to an unsuspecting public, putting patients at risk for complications. This is a cause for concern as more and more patients are seeking cosmetic medical procedures from medical spas.

PHYSICIAN SUPERVISION IS NEEDED

The laser procedures offered in medical spas constitute surgery, dermal fillers are considered medical devices, and the administration of neurotoxins can have dangerous effects if done incorrectly. **All of these procedures constitute the practice of medicine, and yet:**

ONLY
37% of medical spas were owned by physicians in 2022

ABOUT
70% of medical spas lack any affiliation with a medical practice


Without proper oversight, medical spas contribute to worse health outcomes

Research shows that adverse events following procedures done by non-physicians are likely to be greater in severity than complications following procedures done by physicians. A survey of members of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery found that 61% to 100% of complications seen in their practices were from procedures performed in medical spas, with laser hair removal and intense pulsed light treatments two of the top three most common procedures with complications.

80% The percentage of cosmetic medical procedure lawsuits that involved procedures performed in medical spas by non-physicians between 2008–2011

71% The percentage of cases that resulted in injury from laser surgery performed by a non-physician between 2012–2020

PATIENTS DESERVE TO KNOW WHO IS PROVIDING THEIR CARE

91% 
say a physician’s education and training are vital for optimal care

75%
would wait longer and pay more to be treated by a physician

95% 
say it’s important for a physician to be involved in their diagnosis and treatment

OPTIMAL STATE LAWS GOVERNING MEDICAL SPAS

To protect patient safety, states should enact medical spa safety laws that:

- Ensure a supervising physician is present at the site; immediately able to respond in-person as needed; and trained in the indications for and performance of any cosmetic medical procedure they perform
- Require a supervising physician to perform initial patient assessments; develop a written treatment plan for each patient; and obtain patient consent if the procedure is being done by a non-physician
- Obligate any non-physician to wear identification that clearly identifies their licensure and communicates that they are not a physician



For more information, please visit the American Society of Dermatologic Surgery Association’s [Medical Spa Safety Resources](#).