Iowa: the rules for aesthetic practice

What Iowa's laws and boards say about who may do aesthetic treatments, who must supervise them, and who can own the practice.

Nurse practitioners: Full Practice Authority

Nurse practitioners

Full (AANP). NPs evaluate, diagnose and prescribe without a collaborative agreement; the Board of Nursing alone regulates NP licensure (Iowa Code §152.1).

Physician-led med spas

The Board of Medicine's rule (653 IAC 13.6, effective May 21, 2025) covers aesthetic services below the superficial skin layer: ablative lasers, IPL and LED, radiofrequency, ultrasound, microdermabrasion, microneedling, fat freezing, Botox and filler injections, tattoo removal (not hair removal). A physician medical director needs an unrestricted Iowa license and training in each service, delegates only routine technical work to qualified people licensed or certified by an Iowa health or skin-care board, checks each worker's training, is on site in person at least 4 hours a week, reviews at least 10% of charts, stays within 60 miles and reachable, and keeps informed consent, safety and emergency protocols. Unlicensed staff may only run lasers, as qualified laser technicians with 120 hours of accredited training. Directors and staff need 20 hours of aesthetics CME a year. The rule doesn't stop a qualified non-physician licensee, such as an ARNP, from serving as medical director under their own license.

Delegation by ARNPs

No Board of Nursing guidance on cosmetic procedures was checked in November 2026. Ask the Board of Nursing before delegating.

Who can own the practice

Iowa professional corporations may practice medicine, osteopathic medicine, PA practice or nursing, but only medicine, osteopathic medicine and PA practice are listed as combinable, and only licensees of a profession the corporation practices may own shares (Iowa Code §496C.2, §496C.4, §496C.10). Whether a business owned by a non-physician may employ or contract physicians is not settled: no statute, board ruling or court decision on it was found. Confirm the entity type with an Iowa healthcare attorney.

The biggest risk in Iowa. A physician medical director who isn't on site 4 hours a week or isn't reviewing charts, and unlicensed staff doing anything other than lasers.

Check it with your boards: Iowa Board of Nursing - nursing.iowa.gov and Iowa Board of Medicine - dial.iowa.gov/boards/medicine. Checked November 3, 2026. Rules change, so read the current rule on the board's own site before you act.

Ask S.A.G.E. next. S.A.G.E., our AI practice advisor, answers from this same Iowa reference, free in your TMAA account, which you can set up at go.medicalaestheticsassociation.com/start-here. Try:

1. I'm an RN in Iowa. What has to be in place before I offer injectables?
2. What must my medical director agreement cover in Iowa?
3. What can an esthetician do in Iowa, and what needs an order?

S.A.G.E. is not legal advice. For a binding answer, talk to a healthcare attorney in your state.