Rhode Island: the rules for aesthetic practice

What Rhode Island'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 (R.I. Gen. Laws §§5-34-7, 5-34-44). NPs must carry malpractice insurance of $100,000 per claim and $300,000 aggregate. Controlled-substance details weren't confirmed in November 2026.

Medical director

Required for every medical spa since June 30, 2025 (R.I. Gen. Laws ch. 23-105). It must be a physician or certified nurse practitioner trained in the procedures and devices used (vendor training alone doesn't count), who keeps written protocols on site and provides direct supervision: on site and able to observe the treatment.

Delegating to RNs, estheticians and staff

Only licensed staff may be delegated procedures, and only ones they're trained for, by a supervising physician, PA or APRN. Ablative lasers are limited to physicians, PAs and certified NPs. IV fluids may be ordered only by physicians, PAs and family or adult-gerontology CNPs; LPNs, medical assistants and EMTs may not give IV therapy in these businesses. Estheticians' peels may not exceed 30% acidity.

Exam first

A Rhode Island licensed practitioner must assess the patient before any service: history, exam, written plan. Questionnaires aren't enough, and standing orders for RNs don't meet the standard of care.

Who can own the practice

Physicians, registered nurses, PAs and some other health professionals may own one professional service corporation together, and every owner must be licensed and work in it (R.I. Gen. Laws §7-5.1-3). The Department of Health says a medical spa or IV business owned by someone without a professional license, or not run as a PSC by its own members, needs an organized ambulatory care facility license, and leasing a PSC through a management company to avoid that is a misrepresentation. The 2025 Medical Spas Safety Act also makes medical spas licensed health care facilities once the Department's rules are out. Confirm the entity type with a Rhode Island healthcare attorney.

The biggest risk in Rhode Island. Running a med spa without a qualified medical director on site, using standing orders or questionnaires instead of a practitioner exam, and opening before checking whether the business needs a facility license.

Check it with your boards: Rhode Island Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education - health.ri.gov/licenses/detail.php?id=231 and Rhode Island Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline - health.ri.gov/licensing/physicians. 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 Rhode Island reference, free in your TMAA account, which you can set up at go.medicalaestheticsassociation.com/start-here. Try:

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