

Texas Board of Nursing

Board Position Statements

Board Position Statements do not have the force of law, but are a means of providing direction for nurses on issues of concern to the Board relevant to protection of the public. Board position statements are reviewed annually for relevance and accuracy to current practice, the Nursing Practice Act, and Board rules.

Position Statements

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15.1 Nurses Carrying out Orders from Physician's Assistants

The Nursing Practice Act includes the "administration of medications or treatments ordered by a physician, podiatrist or dentist" as part of the practice of nursing. There are no other health care professionals listed. The Board recognizes that in some practice settings nurses work in collegial relationships with physician assistants (PAs) who may relay a physician's order for a client being cared for by a Nurse.

A Nurse may carry out a physician's order for the administration of treatments or medications relayed by a physician assistant (PA) when that order originates with the PA's supervising physician. Supervision must be continuous but does not require the physical presence of a supervising physician at the place where the PA services are performed provided a supervising physician is readily available by telecommunications. The supervising physician should have given notice to the facility that he/she is registered with the Texas Medical Board (TMB) as the supervising physician for the PA and that he/she has authorized the PA to relay orders. The PA must be licensed or registered by the TMB. A list of physician assistants credentialed by the medical staff and policies directing their practice should be available to the nursing staff.

The order relayed by the PA may originate from a protocol; if the order originates from a protocol, the PA may select specific tasks or functions required to implement the protocol, provided they are within the scope of the protocol. The protocol must be signed by the supervising physician and must be on file and available to the nursing staff at the facility, agency, or organization in which it is carried out. If the tasks or functions ordered fall outside the scope of the protocol, the PA must consult with the physician to obtain a verbal order before the nurse may carry out the order.

As with any order, the Nurse must seek clarification if he/she believes the order or treatment is inaccurate, non-efficacious or contraindicated by consulting with the PA and physician as appropriate.

(Board Action, 01/1994; revised 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.2 The Role of the Licensed Vocational Nurse in the Pronouncement of Death

LVNs do not have the authority to legally determine death, diagnose death, or otherwise pronounce death in the State of Texas. Regardless of practice setting, the importance of initiating CPR in cases where no clear Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders exist is imperative. The Board of Nursing (BON) has investigated cases involving the failure of a LVN to initiate CPR in the absence of a DNR order.

It is within the LVN scope of practice as defined by Rule 217.11(1)-(2) (effective 9/28/2004) and the *Interpretive Guideline for LVN Scope of Practice under Rule 217.11* for a LVN to gather data and perform a **focused** assessment regarding a patient, to recognize significant changes in a patient's condition, and to report said data and observation of significant changes to the physician. The LVN's focused assessment should include nursing observations to determine the presence or absence of the following presumptive or conclusive signs of death:

Presumptive Signs of Death

- The patient is unresponsive,
- The patient has no respirations,
- The patient has no pulse,
- Patient's pupils are fixed and dilated,
- The patient's body temperature indicates hypothermia: skin is cold relative to the patient's baseline skin temperature,
- The patient has generalized cyanosis, and

Conclusive Sign of Death

- There is presence of livor mortis (venous pooling of blood in dependent body parts causing purple discoloration of the skin which does blanch with pressure).

Upon reporting his/her clinical findings to the physician, and in accordance with facility policy, the LVN may accept reasonable physician's orders regarding the care of the client; i.e.: notification of family, postmortem care, documentation; however, a LVN may not accept an order that would require the LVN to "pronounce death," or to complete the state-required "medical certification" of a death that occurs without medical attendance.

Employers are also encouraged to develop policies and procedures directing staff in post-mortum care and procedures, including appropriate measures that can be completed while waiting for a call-back from the attending physician.

The BON has no jurisdiction over physician practice, facility policies, or the laws regulating pronouncement of death in Texas. Additional information on Texas regulations regarding pronouncement of death may be found in Chapters 193 and 671 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, as well as through the Department of State Health Services. A LVN is not responsible for the actions of a physician who elects to pronounce death by remote-means. Physicians are licensed by, and must comply with, rules promulgated by the Texas Medical Board as well as other laws applicable to the physician's practice setting.

References: Texas Statutes, Health and Safety Code; <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/>

(BVNE Statement adopted 06/1999; revised BON statement 01/2006; revised 01/2007)



15.3 LVNs Engaging in Intravenous Therapy, Venipuncture, or PICC Lines

The basic educational curriculum for Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) does not mandate teaching of principles and techniques of insertion for peripheral intravenous catheters, or the administration of fluids and medications via the intravenous route. Knowledge and skills relating to maintaining patency and performing dressing changes of central line intravenous catheters is also not mandated as part of basic LVN education. As such, basic competency in management of intravenous lines/intravenous therapy is not a given for any specific LVN licensee.

Applicable Nursing Standards

LVN practice is guided by the Nursing Practice Act (NPA) and Board Rules. Rule 217.11, Standards of Nursing Practice, is the rule most often applied to nursing practice issues. Two standards applicable in all practice scenarios include:

- 217.11(1)(B) implement measures to promote a safe environment for clients and others, and
- 217.11(1)(T) accept only those assignments that take into consideration client safety and that are commensurate with the nurse's educational preparation, experience, knowledge, and physical and emotional ability.

Additional standards in Rule 217.11 that may be applicable when a LVN chooses to engage in an IV therapy-related task include (but are not limited to):

- (1)(C) Know the rationale for and effects of medications and treatments and shall correctly administer the same,
- (1)(D) Accurately and completely report and document: (i) ..client status....(ii) nursing care rendered...(iii) physician, dentist or podiatrist orders...(iv) administration of medications and treatments....(v) client response(s)....,
- (1)(G) Obtain instruction and supervision as necessary when implementing nursing procedures or practices,
- (1)(H) Make a reasonable effort to obtain orientation/training for competency when encountering new equipment and technology or unfamiliar care situations,
- (1)(R) Be responsible for one's own continuing competence in nursing practice and individual professional growth,
- (2)(A) "Shall utilize a systematic approach to provide individualized, goal-directed nursing care ...[(i)-(v)], and
- (2)(C) ...perform other acts that require education and training as prescribed by board rules and policies, commensurate with the LVN's experience, continuing education, and demonstrated LVN competencies.

The Board's "LVN Interpretive Guideline Under Rule 217.11" provides additional clarification of the Standards Rule as it applies to LVN Scope of Practice. Instruction and skill evaluation relating to LVNs performing insertion of peripheral IV catheters and/or administering IV fluids and medications as prescribed by an authorized practitioner may allow a LVN to expand his/her scope of practice to include intravenous therapy.

It is the opinion of the Board that the LVN shall not engage in IV therapy related to either peripheral or central venous catheters, including venipuncture, administration of IV fluids, and/or administration of IV



push medications, until successful completion of a validation course that instructs the LVN in the knowledge and skills applicable to the LVN's IV therapy practice. The BON does not define or set qualifications for an "IV Validation Course" or for "LVN IV certification." The LVN who chooses to engage in intravenous therapy must first have been instructed in the principles of intravenous therapy congruent with prevailing nursing practice standards.

Insertion of PICC Lines

The Board has further determined that the one-year vocational nursing program does not provide the Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) with the educational foundation to assure client safety in insertion of Peripherally Inserted Central-line Catheters (PICC lines) inclusive of vein selection, insertion/advancement of the catheter, determining placement, and monitoring of the client for untoward reactions in relation to catheter insertion. The Board's Interpretive Guideline for LVN Scope of Practice under Rule 217.11, further maintains that continuing education that falls short of achieving licensure as a registered nurse would be insufficient to assure vocational nurse competency and patient safety with regard to insertion of PICC lines. Therefore, it is the Board's position that insertion of PICC lines is beyond the scope of practice for LVNs.

Administration of IV Fluids and Medications

The ability of a LVN to administer specific IV fluids or drugs, to prepare and/or administer IV "piggy-back" or IV "push" medications, or to monitor and titrate "IV drip" medications of any kind is up to facility policy. The LVN's practice relative to IV therapy must also comply with any other regulations that may exist under the jurisdiction of other regulatory agencies or entities. The LVN who accepts an assignment to engage in any aspect of intravenous therapy is responsible for adhering to the NPA and Board rules, particularly §217.11 Standards of Nursing Practice, including excerpted standards listed above and any other standards or rules applicable to the individual LVN's practice.

All nursing actions related to peripheral and/or central intravenous lines, as well as IV administration of medications, must be completed in accordance with the orders of the prescribing practitioner, as well as written policies, procedures and job descriptions approved by the health care employer.

(Board Action: 06/1995; revised 09/1999; revised 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.4 Educational Mobility

The Board of Nursing supports educational mobility for nurses prepared at the VN, ADN, Diploma and BSN levels and encourages the elimination of needless repetition of experiences or time penalties. Furthermore, the Board encourages existing nursing education programs approved by the Board of Nursing to develop articulation arrangements that specify their policies regarding transfer of academic credits to facilitate educational mobility, especially in underserved areas of the state.

(Board Action 01/1989, revised 01/1992, revised 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.5 Nurses with Responsibility for Initiating Physician Standing Orders

According to the Texas Nursing Practice Act [Tex. Occ. Code Ann. §301.002(3)], the term "Nurse" means "a person required to be licensed under this chapter to engage in professional or vocational nursing." The practice of either professional or vocational nursing frequently involves implementing orders from a physician, podiatrist, or dentist. Timely interventions for various patient populations can be facilitated through the use of physician's standing orders that authorize the nurse to carry out specific orders for a patient presenting with or developing a condition or symptoms addressed in the standing orders.

The specifics of how authorization occurs for a LVN or RN to implement a set of standard physician's orders are defined in the Texas Medical Board's (TMB) Rule 193 (22 Tex. Admin. Code §§193.1-193.12) relating to physician delegation. This rule holds out two (2) methods by which nurses may follow a pre-approved set of orders for treating patients:

- 1) Standing Delegation Orders; and/or
- 2) Standing Medical Orders.

These terms are defined in 22 Tex. Admin. Code §193.2 as follows:

(12) Standing delegation order - *Written instructions, orders, rules, regulations, or procedures prepared by a physician and designed for a patient population with specific diseases, disorders, health problems, or sets of symptoms. Such written instructions, orders, rules, regulations or procedures shall delineate under what set of conditions and circumstances action should be instituted. These instructions, orders, rules, regulations or procedures are to provide authority for and a plan for use with patients presenting themselves prior to being examined or evaluated by a physician to assure that such acts are carried out correctly and are distinct from specific orders written for a particular patient, and shall be limited in scope of authority to be delegated as provided in §193.4 of this title (relating to Scope of Standing Delegation Orders). As used in this chapter, standing delegation orders do not refer to treatment programs ordered by a physician following examination or evaluation by a physician, nor to established procedures for providing of care by personnel under direct, personal supervision of a physician who is directly supervising or overseeing the delivery of medical or health care. Such standing delegation orders should be developed and approved by the physician who is responsible for the delivery of medical care covered by the orders. Such standing delegation orders, at a minimum, should:*

(A) include a written description of the method used in developing and approving them and any revision thereof;

(B) be in writing, dated, and signed by the physician;

(C) specify which acts require a particular level of training or licensure and under what circumstances they are to be performed;

(D) state specific requirements which are to be followed by persons acting under same in performing particular functions;

(E) specify any experience, training, and/or education requirements for those persons who shall perform such orders;



(F) establish a method for initial and continuing evaluation of the competence of those authorized to perform same;

(G) provide for a method of maintaining a written record of those persons authorized to perform same;

(H) specify the scope of supervision required for performance of same, for example, immediate supervision of a physician;

(I) set forth any specialized circumstances under which a person performing same is to immediately communicate with the patient's physician concerning the patient's condition;

(J) state limitations on setting, if any, in which the plan is to be performed;

(K) specify patient record-keeping requirements which shall, at a minimum, provide for accurate and detailed information regarding each patient visit; personnel involved in treatment and evaluation on each visit; drugs, or medications administered, prescribed or provided; and such other information which is routinely noted on patient charts and files by physicians in their offices; and

(L) provide for a method of periodic review, which shall be at least annually, of such plan including the effective date of initiation and the date of termination of the plan after which date the physician shall issue a new plan.

(13) Standing medical orders - Orders, rules, regulations or procedures prepared by a physician or approved by a physician or the medical staff of an institution for patients which have been examined or evaluated by a physician and which are used as a guide in preparation for and carrying out medical or surgical procedures or both. These orders, rules, regulations or procedures are authority and direction for the performance for certain prescribed acts for patients by authorized persons as distinguished from specific orders written for a particular patient.

A third term, "Protocols", is defined narrowly by the TMB and applies to RNs with advanced practice authorization (APRN) by the BON, or to Physician Assistants only:

(10) Protocols - Delegated written authorization to initiate medical aspects of patient care including authorizing a physician assistant or advanced practice nurse to carry out or sign prescription drug orders pursuant to the Medical Practice Act, Texas Occupations Code Annotated, §§157.051-157.060 and §193.6 of this title (relating to the Delegation of the Carrying Out or Signing of Prescription Drug Orders to Physician Assistants and Advanced Practice Nurses). The protocols must be agreed upon and signed by the physician, the physician assistant and/or advanced practice nurse, reviewed and signed at least annually, maintained on site, and must contain a list of the types or categories of dangerous drugs and controlled substances available for prescription, limitations on the number of dosage units and refills permitted, and instructions to be given the patient for follow-up monitoring or contain a list of the types or categories of dangerous drugs and controlled substances that may not be prescribed. Protocols shall be defined to promote the exercise of professional judgment by the advanced practice nurse and physician assistant commensurate with their education and experience. The protocols used by a reasonable and prudent physician exercising sound medical judgment need not describe the



exact steps that an advanced practice nurse or a physician assistant must take with respect to each specific condition, disease, or symptom.

By definition, both vocational and professional nursing excludes “acts of medical diagnosis or the prescription of therapeutic or corrective measures” (Tex. Occ. Code Ann. §301.002(2) and (5)). Based on the above definitions in the TMB rules, RNs who do not have advanced practice authorization from the BON may not utilize "protocols" to carry out physician orders. Likewise, vocational nurses (LVNs) are also prohibited from utilizing protocols as defined by the TMB, as neither LVNs or RNs may engage in acts that require independent medical judgment.

A nurse responsible for initiating physician's standing medical orders or standing delegation orders may select specific tasks or functions for patient management, including the administration of a medication required to implement the selected order provided such selection is within the scope of the standing orders. The selection of such tasks or functions for patient management constitutes a nursing decision that may be carried out by a LVN or RN. In addition, this position statement should not be construed to preclude the use of the term “protocol” for a standard set of orders covering the monitoring and treatment of a given clinical condition (e.g., insulin protocol, heparin protocol, ARDS protocol, etc.) provided said standard orders meet the requirements for standing delegation or standing medical orders as defined by the TMB.

The written standing orders under which nurses function shall be commensurate with each nurse’s educational preparation and experience. The nurse initiating any form of standing orders must act within the scope of the Nursing Practice Act, Board Rules and Regulations, and any other applicable local, state, or federal laws.

(Board Action 07/1988, revised 01/1992, revised 07/2001; revised 01/2005; revised 01/2007)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.6 Board Rules Associated With Alleged Patient “Abandonment”

The Board of Nursing (BON or Board), in keeping with its mission to protect the public health, safety, and welfare, holds nurses accountable for providing a safe environment for clients and others over whom the nurse is responsible [Rule 217.11(1)(B)]. Though the Nursing Practice Act (NPA) and Board Rules do not define the term “*abandonment*,” the Board has investigated and disciplined nurses in the past for issues surrounding the concept of *abandonment* as it relates to *the nurse’s duty to the patient*. The Board’s position applies to licensed nurses (LVNs and RNs), including RN’s with advanced practice authorization (Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Nurse Midwives, and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists) in Texas.

Nurse’s Duty To A Patient

All nurses, regardless of practice setting or position title/role, are required to adhere to the NPA and Board Rules. The “core” rules relating to nursing practice, however, are Rules 217.11, Standards of Nursing Practice, and 217.12, Unprofessional Conduct. The standard upon which other standards are based is 217.11(1)(B) “...promote a safe environment for clients and others.” This standard supersedes any physician’s order or facility’s policy, and has previously been upheld in a landmark case, *Lunsford v. Board of Nurse Examiners*, 648 S.W. 2d 391 (Tex. App. -- Austin 1983). The concept of the nurse’s duty to promote client safety also serves as the basis for behavior that could be considered unprofessional conduct by a nurse.

Patients under the care of a nurse are vulnerable by virtue of illness, injury, and/or the dependent nature and unequal power base of the nurse-patient relationship. Persons who are especially vulnerable include the elderly, children, the mentally ill, sedated and anesthetized patients, those whose mental or cognitive ability is compromised, and patients who are physically disabled, immobilized, restrained, or secluded. It is this dual-vulnerability (client status and nurse’s power base) that creates the nurse’s duty to protect the client. The distinction between a nurse leaving employment versus a nurse violating a duty to a patient through leaving an assignment is often confused. The first is an employment issue, the other is potentially a licensure issue.

There is also no routine answer to the question, “*When does the nurse’s duty to a patient begin?*” The nurse’s duty is not defined by any single event such as clocking in or taking report. From a BON standpoint, the focus for disciplinary sanctions is on the relationship and responsibility of the nurse to the patient, not to the employer or employment setting.

Employment Issues

Though the Board has no jurisdiction over employers or employment-related issues, other laws regulating facility licensure may apply certain responsibilities to the employer for provision of client safety, such as development of effective patient care systems or provision of adequate numbers of qualified staff. Specific requirements for a given facility may be obtained by contacting the applicable licensing authority for the institution.

The Board believes that the following additional examples of employment issues would not typically involve violations of the NPA or Board Rules:



- Resignation without advance notice, assuming the nurse's current patient care assignment and/or work shift has been completed.
- Refusal to work additional shifts, either "doubles" or extra shifts on days off.
- Other work-related issues, such as frequent absenteeism or tardiness, or conflicts between staff/employees.

The Board believes nurses should be vigilant and exercise good professional judgment when accepting assignments that may be requested by employers who need nurses to fill vacant shifts for licensed nursing staff, or other staffing-related situations. *Clear communication* between staff and supervisors is essential to arrive at solutions that best focus on patient care needs without compromising either patient safety or a nurse's license.

Licensure Issues

As previously noted, the rules most frequently applied to nursing practice concerns are Rule 217.11 *Standards of Nursing Practice*, and Rule 217.12 *Unprofessional Conduct*. In relation to questions of "abandonment," standard 217.11(1)(I) holds the nurse responsible to "notify the appropriate supervisor when leaving a nursing assignment." This standard should not be mis-interpreted to mean that the nurse may simply notify the supervisor that he/she is leaving the premises, regardless of whether or not another qualified licensed nurse is available to assume care of the nurse's patients. Specific procedures to follow in a given circumstance (nurse becomes ill, family emergency, etc.) should be delineated in facility policies (which the Board does not regulate).

Some actions may be more obvious examples of unprofessional conduct that could result in sanctions on the nurse's license. Examples of conduct that could lead to Board action on the nurse's license may include:

- Sleeping on the job, which effectively makes the nurse unavailable to observe the patient or respond to the patient's needs, even though the nurse is physically present.
- Simply walking off the job in mid-shift without notifying anyone, and without regard for patient safety;
- Failing to initiate or complete an agreed assignment when the nurse is the sole care provider, and/or the nurse is a consultant or supervisor in a home or homelike setting; and/or failing to notify a supervisor in a timely manner that the assignment will not be done, and/or falsifying records to the effect that the missed nursing visit was indeed completed ; and/or
- Leaving the assigned patient care area and remaining gone/unavailable for a period of time such that the care of any/all patients may be compromised due to lack of available licensed staff.

The Board may impose sanctions on a nurse's license for actions that potentially place patients at risk for harm, or when harm has resulted because a nurse violated his/her duty to the client by leaving a patient care assignment in a manner inconsistent with the Board Rules.

Board Disciplinary Actions

Complaints of "patient abandonment" when it is obvious from the allegation that it is an employment issue will not be investigated by the Board. In these circumstances, however, both parties (the nurse and the employer) may be advised to strive for alternate solutions to avoid similar situations in the future.



Some general factors that would be considered in investigating a complaint of leaving an assignment by a nurse would include, but not be limited to:

- the extent of dependency or disability of the patient;
- stability of the patient;
- the length of time the patient was deprived of care;
- any harm to the patient/level of risk of harm to the patient;
- steps taken by the nurse to notify a supervisor of the inability to provide care;
- previous history of leaving a patient-care assignment;
- other unprofessional conduct in relation to the practice of nursing;
- general nurse competency regarding adherence to minimum nursing standards.

As with all allegations received by the Board, the alleged conduct by a nurse will be thoroughly investigated to determine what, if any, violations of the NPA and rules have occurred. If evidence of violations exists, the Board must then determine what level of sanction is appropriate to take on the nurse's license, and what specific stipulation requirements will be applied. Depending upon the case analysis, Board actions may range from the case being closed with no findings or action, all the way to suspension and/or revocation/voluntary surrender of the nurse's license.

Safe Harbor Peer Review:

If a nurse feels he/she is being asked to accept an assignment that would potentially cause the nurse to violate his/her duty to a patient, the nurse may be able to invoke "safe harbor," depending on whether or not the nurse's employer meets requirements that would make it mandatory for the employer to have a peer review plan in place. This is established in the NPA, Chapter 303 *Peer Review*, and in Rule 217.20 *Safe Harbor Peer Review and Whistleblower Protections*. Safe Harbor has two effects related to the nurse's license:

(1) It is a means by which a nurse can request a peer review committee determination of a specific situation in relation to the nurse's duty to a patient; and

(2) It affords the nurse immunity from Board action against the nurse's license if the nurse invokes Safe Harbor in accordance with Rule 217.20. For the nurse to activate this immunity status, the nurse must notify the assigning supervisor at the time the assignment request is made, and the nurse must submit the required information in writing as specified in Rule 217.20(d)(3)(A) or on the Board's Safe Harbor Quick Request Form.

Links to Related Articles (all of the following are located on the Board's web page):

- Safe Harbor Form <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/practice/safe.html>
- FAQ on Overtime/Hours of Work <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/practice/faq-overtime.html>
- FAQ on Peer Review <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/practice/faq-peerreview.html>
- FAQ on Staffing Ratios <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/practice/faq-staffing.html>
- FAQ on Floating <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/practice/faq-floating.html>
- RN Update, July 2002: Overview of TDH Staffing Plans and CNO Requirement Rules



15.7 The Role of LVNs & RNs in Management and/or Administration of Medications via Epidural or Intrathecal Catheter Routes

Role of the LVN:

The LVN can provide basic nursing care to patients with epidural or intrathecal catheters. It is the opinion of the Board that the licensed vocational nurse shall not be responsible for the management of a patient's epidural or intrathecal catheter including administration of any medications via either epidural or intrathecal catheter routes. Management of epidural or intrathecal catheters requires the mastery of complex nursing knowledge and skills that are beyond the competencies of the vocational nursing program or a continuing education course.

Role of the RN:

The Board has determined that it may be within the scope of practice of a registered professional nurse to administer analgesic and anesthetic agents via the epidural or intrathecal routes for purposes of pain control. As with all areas of nursing practice, the RN must apply the Nursing Practice Act (NPA) and Board Rules to the specific practice setting, and must utilize good professional judgment in determining whether or not to engage in a given patient-care related activity.

The Board believes that only licensed anesthesia care providers as described by the American Society of Anesthesiologists and the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, as authorized by applicable laws should perform insertion and verification of epidural or intrathecal catheter placement. Consistent with state law, the attending physician or the qualified provider must order the drugs, dosages, and concentrations of medications to be administered to the patient through the catheter. These interventions are beyond the scope of the registered professional nurse in that independent medical judgment and formal advanced education and skills training are required to achieve and maintain competence in performing these procedures.

RNs who choose to engage in administration of properly ordered medications via the epidural or intrathecal routes must have documentation that the RN has participated in educational activities to gain and maintain the knowledge and skill necessary to safely administer and monitor patient responses, including the ability to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the anatomy, physiology, and pharmacology of patients receiving medications via the epidural or intrathecal routes;
- Anticipate and recognize potential complications of the analgesia relative to the type of infusion device and catheter used;
- Recognize emergency situations and institute appropriate nursing interventions to stabilize the client and prevent complications;
- Implement appropriate nursing care of patients to include:
 - a) observation and monitoring of sedation levels and other patient parameters;
 - b) administration and effectiveness of medication, catheter maintenance and catheter placement checks;



- c) applicable teaching for both patients and their family/significant others related to expected patient outcomes/responses and possible side effects of the medication or treatment; and
- d) knowledge and skill to remove catheters when applicable.

Appropriate nursing policies and procedures that address the education and skills of the RN and nursing care of the patient should be developed to guide the RN in the administration of epidural and/or intrathecal medications. RNs and facilities should consider evidence-based practice guidelines put forth by professional specialty organizations(s), such as the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists and the American Society of Anesthesiologists when developing appropriate guidance for the RN in a particular practice setting. For example, the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses' (AWHONN) has a clinical position statement on "The Role of the Registered Nurse in the Care of Pregnant Women Receiving Analgesia/Anesthesia by Catheter Techniques (Epidural, Intrathecal, Spinal, PCEA Catheters." This nationally recognized practice guideline states that it is beyond the scope of practice of the obstetrical nurse to institute or change the rate of continuous infusions via epidural or intrathecal catheters. The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists has a similar position.

The Board also encourages the use of the BON's "Six Step Decision Making Model for Determining Nursing Scope of Practice." Finally, standing medical orders approved by the medical and/or anesthesia staff of the facility should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- 1) The purpose and goal of treatment;
- 2) The dosage range of medication to be administered including the maximum dosage;
- 3) Intravenous access;
- 4) Treatment of respiratory depression and other side effects including an order for a narcotic antagonist;
- 5) Options for inadequate pain control; and
- 6) Physician/CRNA availability and back-up.

(LVN role: BVNE 1994; revised BON 01/2005) (RN role: BON 06/1991; revised 01/2003; revised 01/2004; revised 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.8 Role of the Nurse in Moderate Sedation

Note: *This position statement is not intended to apply to either:*

(1) *The practice of the registered nurse who holds authorization to practice as an advanced practice registered nurse in the role and specialty of nurse anesthetist (CRNA) functioning within his/her authorized scope of practice, or to*

(2) *The Registered Nurse practicing in an acute care setting, such as critical care, where the patient in question is intubated, receiving mechanical ventilatory support, and continuously monitored by the patient care RN.*

Role of the LVN:

The administration of pharmacologic agents via IV or other routes for the purpose of achieving moderate sedation requires mastery of complex nursing knowledge, advanced skills, and the ability to make independent nursing judgments during an unstable and unpredictable period for the patient. It is the opinion of the Board that the one-year vocational nursing program does not provide the Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) with the educational foundation to assure patient safety for optimal anesthesia care inclusive of both the administration of pharmacologic agents intended to induce moderate sedation and/or assessment and monitoring of the patient receiving moderate (conscious) sedation.

In line with Rule 217.11 *Standards of Nursing Practice*, the Board's *Interpretive Guideline for LVN Scope of Practice under Rule 217.11*, and Board Position Statement 15.10 *Continuing Education: Limitations for Expanding Scope of Nursing Practice*, the Board also maintains that continuing education that falls short of achieving licensure as a registered nurse would be insufficient to assure vocational nurse competency and patient safety with regard to both medication administration and patient monitoring associated with moderate sedation.

Though the Board cannot dictate physician practice, it is the Board's position that a LVN cannot administer medications or monitor patients receiving moderate sedation as a delegated medical act.

Role of the RN or non-CRNA Advanced Practice Nurse:

Though optimal anesthesia care is best provided by qualified certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) or anesthesiologists, the Board recognizes that the demand in the practice setting necessitates provision of moderate sedation by registered nurses and non-CRNA advanced practice nurses in certain practice situations.

All licensed nurses practicing in Texas are required to "know and comply" with the Nursing Practice Act (NPA) and Board Rules. Rule 217.11(1)(B) requires the nurse to "promote a safe environment for clients and others." This standard establishes the nurse's duty to the patient/client, which **supercedes any physician order or any facility policy**. This "duty" to the patient requires the nurse to use good professional judgement when choosing to assist or engage in a given procedure. [See Position Statement 15.14 *Duty of a Nurse In Any Practice Setting*].

As the NPA and rules are not prescriptive to specific tasks a nurse may or may not perform, a RN or non-CRNA advanced practice nurse should consider evidence-based practice guidelines put forth by professional organizations with clinical expertise in the administration of pharmacologic agents used for sedation/anesthesia as well as advanced airway management and cardiovascular support. A number



of professional specialty organizations have well-defined standards and recommendations for ongoing nursing education and competency assessment related to administration and monitoring of patients receiving moderate sedation.

These organizations include the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA), the American Nurses Association (ANA), the Association of PeriOperative Registered Nurses (AORN), and the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN). The AWHONN position statement is also endorsed by the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN). Statements published by the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) also support the positions of the above nursing organizations. The Board advises the nurse use caution in applying moderate sedation standards of any individual or specialty group who are not also experts in the field of advanced airway management/anesthesia. The Board encourages the use of the BON's "Six Step Decision Making Model for Determining Nursing Scope of Practice."

Employing institutions should develop policies and procedures to guide the RN or non-CRNA advanced practice nurse in administration of medications and patient monitoring associated with moderate sedation. Policies and procedures should include but not be limited to:

- Performance of a pre-sedation health assessment by the individual ordering the sedation and the nurse administering the sedation
- Guidelines for patient monitoring, drug administration, and a plan for dealing with potential complications or emergency situation developed in accordance with currently accepted standards of practice
- Accessibility of emergency equipment and supplies
- Documentation and monitoring of the level of sedation and physiologic measurements (e.g. blood pressure, oxygen saturation, cardiac rate and rhythm)
- Documentation/evidence of initial education and training and ongoing competence of the RN administering and/or monitoring patients receiving moderate sedation

Use of Specific Pharmacologic Agents

It is up to facilities and physicians to determine specific pharmacologic agents to be used to induce moderate sedation. The Board advises the RN or non-CRNA advanced practice registered nurse use caution, however, in deciding whether or not s/he has the competency to administer the specific pharmacologic agents ordered by the physician. What is within the scope of practice for one RN is not necessarily within the scope of practice for another RN. (See references to §217.11 & Six-Step Decision-Making Model above). With regard to this issue, the Board recommends the RN also take into consideration:

1. Availability of and knowledge regarding the administration of reversal agents for the pharmacologic agents used; and
2. If reversal agents do not exist for the pharmacologic agents used or the criteria outlined in (1) above are not met, then the nurse must consider his/her individual knowledge, skills, and abilities to rescue a patient from un-intended deep sedation/anesthesia using advanced life support airway management equipment and techniques.



RNs or non-CRNA Advanced Practice Registered Nurses Administering Propofol, Ketamine, or Other Anesthetic Agents to Non-Intubated Patients

Of concern to the Board is the growing number of inquiries related to RNs and non-CRNA advanced practice registered nurses administering Propofol, Ketamine, or other drugs commonly used for anesthesia purposes to non-intubated patients for the purpose of moderate sedation in a variety of patient care settings. It is critical for any RN who chooses to engage in moderate sedation to appreciate the differences between *moderate sedation* and *deep sedation/anesthesia*.

Moderate Sedation Versus Deep Sedation Anesthesia

According to the professional literature "moderate sedation" is defined as a medication-induced, medically controlled state of depressed consciousness. Included in the literature from various professional organizations is the caveat that, while under moderate sedation, the patient at all times retains the ability to independently and continuously maintain a patent airway and cardiovascular function, and is able to respond meaningfully and purposefully to verbal commands, with or without light physical stimulation. Reflex withdrawal to physical stimulation is not considered a purposeful response. Loss of consciousness for patients undergoing moderate sedation should not be the goal and thus pharmacologic agents used should render this result unlikely. If the patient requires painful or repeated stimulation for arousal and/or airway maintenance, this is considered deep sedation.

In a state of deep sedation, the patient's level of consciousness is depressed, and the patient is likely to require assistance to maintain a patent airway. Deep sedation occurring in a patient who is not appropriately monitored and/or who does not have appropriate airway support may result in a life-threatening emergency for the patient. This is not consistent with the concept of moderate sedation as defined in this position statement or the professional literature and is generally considered to be beyond the scope of practice of the RN.

Although Propofol is classified as a sedative/hypnotic, according to the manufacturer's product information, it is intended for use as an anesthetic agent or for the purpose of maintaining sedation of an intubated, mechanically ventilated patient. The product information brochure for Propofol further includes a warning that "only persons trained to administer general anesthesia should administer propofol for purposes of general anesthesia or for monitored anesthesia care/sedation." The clinical effects for patients receiving anesthetic agents such as Propofol may vary widely within a negligible dose range. Though reportedly "short-acting", it is also noteworthy that there are **no** reversal agents for Propofol.

The patient receiving anesthetic agents is at increased risk for loss of consciousness and/or normal protective reflexes, regardless of who is administering this medication. Again, this is not consistent with the concept of moderate sedation outlined in the professional literature.

Though the RN or non-CRNA advanced practice registered nurse may have completed continuing education in advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) and practiced techniques during the training program, this process does not ensure ongoing expertise in airway management and emergency intubation. The American Heart Association (AHA) cautions ACLS providers about attempting tracheal intubation in an emergency situation since "*Repeated safe and effective placement of the tracheal tube, over the wide range of patient and environmental conditions encountered in resuscitation, requires considerable skill and experience. Unless initial training is sufficient and ongoing practice and experience are adequate, fatal complications may result.*"¹ It is also important to note that no continuing education program, including ACLS programs, will ensure that the RN or non-CRNA advanced practice registered nurse has the knowledge, skills and abilities to rescue a patient from deep sedation or general anesthesia.



Furthermore, it is the joint position of the AANA and ASA that, “because sedation is a continuum, it is not always possible to predict how an individual patient will respond.” These organizations state that anesthetic agents, including induction agents, should be administered only by qualified anesthesia providers who are trained in the administration of general anesthesia.

Therefore, it is the position of the Board that the administration of anesthetic agents (e.g. propofol, methohexital, ketamine, and etomidate) is outside the scope of practice for RNs and non-CRNA advanced practice registered nurses **except** in the following situations:

- when assisting in the physical presence of a CRNA or anesthesiologist
- when administering these medications as part of a clinical experience within an advanced educational program of study that prepares the individual for licensure as a nurse anesthetist (i.e. when functioning as a student nurse anesthetist)
- when administering these medications to patients who are intubated and mechanically ventilated in critical care settings
- when assisting an individual with current competence in advanced airway management, including emergency intubation procedures

While the physician or other health care provider performing the procedure may possess the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to rescue a patient from deep sedation and general anesthesia, it is not prudent to presume this physician will be able to leave the surgical site or abandon the procedure to assist in rescuing the patient.

The Board again stresses that the nurse’s duty to assure patient safety [Rule 217.11(1)(B)] is an independent obligation under his/her professional licensure that supercedes any physician order or facility policy.^{2,3} It is important to note that the nurse’s duty to the patient obligates him/her to decline orders for medications or doses of medications that have the potential to cause the patient to reach a deeper level of sedation or anesthesia. The nurse’s duty is outlined in detail in Board Position Statement 15.14 *Duty of a Nurse In Any Practice Setting*.

Recommended Reference Article: The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) published an article in the November 3, 2005 Acute Care Edition of the Medication Safety Alert Newsletter titled “*Propofol Sedation: Who Should Administer?*” <http://www.ismp.org/Newsletters/acutecare/articles/20051103.asp>. This article highlights patient safety concerns related to administration of agents, such as Propofol, to non-intubated patients. The concerns mirror-image those of the Board as noted in this position statement.

¹ American Heart Association in collaboration with International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation, Guidelines 2003 for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care: International Consensus on Science, Part 3: Adult Basic Life Support. *Circulation*. 2003; 102(suppl I): page I-100.

²American Association of Nurse Anesthetists and American Society of Anesthesiologists. Joint Position Statement, May, 2004, “AANA–ASA Joint Statement Regarding Propofol Administration” <http://www.aana.com/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=764>

³ Lunsford vs. BNE, 1983, 648 S.W. 391, Tex. App–Austin 1983



15.9 Performance of Laser Therapy by RNs or LVNs

The Board of Nursing (BON) recognizes that the use of laser therapy and the technology of lasers has changed rapidly since their introduction for medical use. Nurses fulfill many important roles in the use of laser therapies. These roles and functions change based upon the type of procedure and the setting in which the treatment occurs. It is not within the scope of nursing practice to perform the delivery of laser energy on a patient as an independent nursing function.

RNs (including Advanced Practice Registered Nurses practicing within their educated role and specialty) or LVNs who choose to administer laser therapy under physician delegation must know and comply with the provisions set forth in the TMB's rules for delegates, as well as the Nursing Practice Act (NPA) and Rules of the BON.

Additional criteria applicable to the nurse who elects to accept physician delegation in the use of non-ablative laser therapy include:

- (1) Appropriate education related to use of laser technologies for medical purposes, including laser safety standards of the American National Standards Institute and FDA intended-use labeling parameters;
- (2) The nurse's education and skill assessment is documented in his/her personnel record;
- (3) The procedure has been ordered by a currently licensed physician, podiatrist, or dentist or by an Advanced Health Practitioner working in collaboration with one of the aforementioned practitioners; and
- (4) Appropriate medical, nursing, and support service back up is available, since remedies for untoward effects of laser therapy may go beyond the scope of practice of the nurse performing the procedure.

As in carrying out any delegated medical act, the RN is expected to comply with the Nursing Practice Act and the Board's Rules and Regulations.

(Board Action, 05/1992; revised 11/1997; revised 01/2003; revised 04/2004)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.10 Continuing Education: Limitations for Expanding Scope of Practice

Foundation for Initial Licensure and/or APN authorization

The Board's Advisory Committee on Education states in its *"Differentiated Entry Level Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs, Vocational (VN), Diploma/Associate Degree (Dip/ADN), Baccalaureate (BSN), September 2002"* (<http://www.bon.state.tx.us/about/pdfs/del-comp.pdf>) that: "The curricula of each of the nursing programs differ, resulting in differentiated entry level competencies of graduates....The competencies of each educational level build upon the previous level." On a national level, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc. (NCSBN) develops and administers two national nurse licensure examinations; the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN®), and the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN®). These two examinations are used by all U.S. state and territorial boards of nursing to test entry-level nursing competence of candidates for licensure as Registered Nurses and as Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses.

Recognition as an advanced practice nurse in Texas requires completion of a master's or post-master's advanced practice program as well as national certification in the advanced role and specialty. To gain recognition as an advanced practice nurse in Texas, the nurse must first be licensed as a RN in Texas or have a valid unencumbered RN license from a compact state. The nurse must then submit an application to the Board for "authorization" in the advanced practice role and specialty.

Limitations of "Continuing Education"

The nursing shortage is creating ever greater challenges for those who must fill nursing vacancies at all levels --- LVNs, RNs, and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) in various specialties. As efforts to invent new ways to fill this growing void expand, the Board is receiving a growing number of calls to clarify the term "continuing education" in relation to how far a nurse can expand his/her practice with informal continuing education offerings.

The formal education for entry into nursing practice in Texas is differentiated between vocational and professional (registered) nursing. Formalized education for advanced practice also requires completion of a formal program of education in the advanced practice role and specialty at the master's or post-master's level.

The Board believes that for a nurse to successfully make a transition from one level of nursing practice to the next requires the completion of a formal program of education as defined in the applicable board rule. The Board also believes that completion of on-going, informal continuing education offerings, such as workshops or on-line offerings in a specialty area, serve to expand and maintain the competency of the nurse at the current level of licensure/recognition. No amount of informal or on-the-job-training can qualify a LVN to perform the same level of care as the RN. Likewise, the RN cannot engage in aspects of care that require independent medical judgement in a given APRN role and specialty without the formal education, national certification, and proper authorization in that advanced practice nurse role and specialty.

For example, a LVN with 10 years of home care experience cannot perform the comprehensive assessment and initiate the nursing care plan on a patient newly admitted to the LVN's home care



agency's service. This is precluded in both BON Rule 217.11 as well as in the home care regulations. Attending a workshop and/or spending time under the supervision of a RN does not qualify the LVN to engage in practice that is designated in rule as being exclusive to the next level of licensure.

Therefore, any nurse, regardless of experience, who engages in nursing practice that would otherwise require a higher level of licensure or a different level of authorization is practicing outside of his/her scope of practice, and may be subject to disciplinary action congruent with the NPA and Rules applicable to LVNs, RNs, and/or RNs with APRN authorization in a given role/specialty.

(Adopted 01/2005)

(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.11 Delegated Medical Acts

In carrying out orders from physicians, podiatrists, or dentists for the administration of medications or treatments, nurses are usually engaged in the practice of vocational or professional nursing in accordance with the applicable licensure of the individual nurse. In carrying out some physician orders, however, LVNs or RNs may perform acts not usually considered to be within the scope of vocational or professional nursing practice, respectively. Such tasks are delegated and supervised by physicians, podiatrists, or dentists. RNs who lack authorization as advanced practice nurses in a specified role and specialty, and LVNs may not engage in "acts of medical diagnosis or prescription of therapeutic or corrective measures" [NPA, Section 301.002(2) and (5)] as these acts require independent medical judgment, which is beyond the scope of practice of the vocational or registered nurse .

In carrying out the delegated medical function, the nurse is expected to comply with the Standards of Nursing Practice just as if performing a nursing procedure. The Board's position is that a LVN or RN may carry out a delegated medical act if the following criteria are met:

1. The nurse has received appropriate education and supervised practice, is competent to perform the procedure safely, and can respond appropriately to complications and/or untoward effects of the procedure (refer to Standards in Rule 217.11(1)(C), (1)(T), (1)(G), (1)(M), (1)(N), and (1)(R);
2. The nurse's education and skills assessment are documented in his/her personnel record;
3. The nursing and medical staffs have collaborated in the development of written policies/procedures/practice guidelines for the delegated acts, these are available to nursing staff practicing in the facility, and the guidelines are reviewed annually, if applicable;
4. The procedure has been ordered by an appropriate licensed practitioner; and
5. Appropriate medical and nursing back-up is available.

The Board recognizes that nursing practice is dynamic and that acts which today may be considered delegated medical acts may in the future be considered within the scope of either vocational or professional nursing practice. The Board, therefore, advises nurses that they must comply with the Board's Standards of Nursing Practice and any other applicable regulations when carrying out nursing and/or delegated medical acts.

(Board Action 09/1993; revised. 03/1994; revised 01/2001; revised 01/2003; revised 01/2004; revised 01/2005)

(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.12 Use Of American Psychiatric Association Diagnoses by LVNS, RNs, or APRNs

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) diagnoses are multi-disciplinary psychiatric diagnoses used for the purpose of applying objective criteria, establishing a practice framework and communicating findings with other health care professionals. The current version, DSM-IV-TR (Fourth Edition, Text Revision) is scheduled to be replaced by the DSM-V (Fifth Edition) in 2011 or later.

In accordance with the Nursing Practice Act (NPA), Section 301.002(2) and (5), acts of medical diagnosis or prescription of therapeutic or corrective measures are beyond the scope of practice for licensed vocational nurses as well as registered nurses who are not Board authorized in an appropriate Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) role and speciality.

The use of DSM-IV diagnoses by a Registered Nurse recognized by the Board as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse in the role and specialty of either a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) in Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing or as a Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner is authorized provided he/she is acting within the scope of his/her advanced practice role and specialty and that the diagnoses utilized are appropriate for the individual APRN's advanced education, experience, and scope of practice. APRNs must also utilize protocols or other written authorization when providing medical aspects of care in compliance with Rule 221 "Advanced Practice Nurses." When patient problems are identified that are outside the CNS'/NP's scope of practice or expertise, a referral to the appropriate medical provider is indicated.

(Board Action, 09/1996; revised 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.13 Role Of LVNs and RNs As School Nurses

The Board of Nursing (BON) recognizes that the youth of Texas are our most valuable natural resource. The BON acknowledges that although students come to school with complex and diverse health care needs, they should be provided an education in the least restrictive environment. The BON recognizes that the school children of Texas have the right to receive safe, appropriate, specialized health services that may be required to assure the child's inclusion in the school environment.

Registered Nurses in the School Setting

The Board of Nursing (BON) believes that school nursing is a professional registered nursing (RN) specialty. School nursing involves the identification, prevention and intervention to remedy or modify students' health needs. The RN has the educational preparation and critical thinking skills as well as clinical expertise which are essential to nursing in the school setting. These activities involve the comprehensive assessment of the nursing/health care needs of the student, the development of a plan of care, implementation of the plan, and evaluation of the outcomes. The provision of these services by the RN contributes directly to the students' education and to the successful outcome of the educational process. These essential components of professional nursing practice are the responsibility of the RN in compliance with Rule 217.11(3)(A).

Vocational Nurses in the School Setting

The clinically intensive vocational nursing program curriculum prepares entry level nurses to provide direct patient care to acutely and chronically ill clients/patients in structured health settings (such as acute care and long-term care) who are experiencing conditions with predictable health outcomes. The *Differentiated Entry Level Competencies (DELC)** define a "structured" setting as "a geographical and/or situational environment where the policies, procedures, and protocols for provision of health care are established and in which there is recourse to assistance and support from the full scope of nursing expertise." Thus, school settings do not qualify as "structured" healthcare settings, and LVN curriculum is not designed to provide competencies in complex independent judgment and decision-making skills.

The provision of nursing care when provided by a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) in a school setting should be under the supervision of the RN. The RN, in compliance with the BON's Standards of Nursing Practice [Rule 217.11], assigns those aspects and activities to the LVN that are within the LVN's educational preparation and demonstrated competency to provide. The RN monitors, coordinates, and evaluates the provision of health services necessary to meet individual student health needs essential in achieving educational objectives.

RN Delegation to Unlicensed Personnel

Due to the growing number of students entering the school system with special health care needs, the BON recognizes that not all health-related services can be provided by a RN or LVN. Therefore, the RN may delegate tasks in the school setting in compliance with the BON's Delegation Rules 224 and 225. School is considered an independent living environment as defined in Rule 225; however, acute or emergency situations in the school setting may be delegated in accordance with Rule 224 as applicable. For example, emergency administration of Epi-pens, Glucagon, and Diastat may be administered by an unlicensed person under §224.6(4) in order to stabilize the child and prevent complications from delaying



treatment. The decision to delegate a specific task is always at the discretion of the RN in accordance with §224.8(b)(1)(C) or §225.9(c).

Other Laws Impacting School Health Care

In a school setting, the administration of medication may be assigned to an unlicensed person by the public school official in accordance with the rules of the Texas Education Code. The RN's obligation under §225.13 is to (1) verify the training of the unlicensed person, and (2) verify the competency of the unlicensed person to perform the task safely. If the RN is unable to assure (1) and (2) have been met, the RN must (b) notify the public school official of the situation.

Summary

Given the complexity, the current number, and the future projections of increasing numbers of children entering the school system with complex nursing and health-related needs, the BON believes that the RN must establish a an individualized nursing care plan for each child as applicable. The RN may be assisted by LVNs and unlicensed assistive personnel in the delivery of services to ensure the delivery of safe, effective health care to the school children of Texas.

(Adopted 11/1996, revised 11/1997; revised 01/2003; revised 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.14 Duty of a Nurse in any Practice Setting

In a time when cost consciousness and a drive for increasing productivity have brought about the reorganization and restructuring of health care delivery systems, the effects of these new delivery systems on the safety of clients/patients have placed a greater burden on the licensed vocational nurse (LVN) and the registered professional nurse (RN) to consider the meaning of licensure and assurance of quality care that it provides.

In the interest of fulfilling its mission to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Texas through the regulation of nurses, the Board of Nursing (BON), through the Nursing Practice Act and Board Rules, emphasizes the nurse's responsibility and duty to the client/patient to provide safe, effective nursing care.

Specifically, the following portions of the Board Rules and supporting documents underscore the duty and responsibilities of the LVN and/or the RN to the client/patient:

1. The Standards of Nursing Practice differentiate the roles of the LVN and the RN in accepting nursing care assignments, assuring a safe environment for patients, and obtaining instruction and supervision as needed (Rule 217.11); and

2. In *Lunsford v. Board of Nurse Examiners*, 648 S.W. 2d 391 (Tex. App.--Austin, 1983), the court in affirming the disciplinary action of the Board, held that a nurse has a duty to the patient which cannot be superseded by hospital policy or physician's order.

- This landmark case involved a gentleman who arrived to a rural hospital via private vehicle. The gentleman was experiencing severe chest pain, nausea, and sweating—all hallmark symptoms of myocardial infarction (heart attack). Nurse Lunsford was summoned to the ER waiting room by this gentleman's friend. Upon seeing the acute distress the man was experiencing and hearing his symptoms, she instructed his friend to drive the man to the nearest facility equipped to handle heart attack victims. This facility was 24 miles away. The man succumbed to the heart attack 5 miles away from the small hospital.
- When the Board sought to sanction the nurse's license, the nurse maintained that the ER physician (who never saw the man) told her the man needed to be transported to the larger facility. The facility policy was also to transfer patients experiencing heart attacks (via ambulance) to the larger facility that was equipped to provide the broad range of therapies that might be needed.
- The court sided with the BON and agreed that the nurse had the knowledge, skills and abilities to recognize the life-threatening nature of the man's symptoms. Because of this knowledge, the court maintained that it was the nurse's duty to act in the best interest of the client by assessing the man, taking measures to stabilize him and to prevent complications, and communicating his condition to other staff (such as the MD) in order to enlist appropriate medical care.

The Board's Disciplinary Sanction Policies discuss expectations of all nurses regarding behaviors that are consistent with the Board's rules on Good Professional Character, §§213.27-213.29. These policies explain the client's vulnerability and the nurse's "power" differential over the client by virtue of the client's status (with regard to age, illness, mental infirmity, etc) and by the nature of the nurse:client relationship



(where the client typically defers decisions to the nurse, and relies on the nurse to protect the client from harm).

- The delegation rules guide the RN in delegation of tasks to unlicensed assistive personnel who are utilized to enhance the contribution of the RN to the client's/patient's well being. When performing nursing tasks, the unlicensed person cannot function independently and functions only under the RN's delegation and supervision. Through delegation the RN retains responsibility and accountability for care rendered (Rules 224 and 225). The Board may take disciplinary action against the license of a RN or RN administrator for inappropriate delegation
- RNs with advanced practice authorization from the Board must comply with the same rules applicable to other RNs. In addition, rules specific to advanced practice nursing Chapters 221 & 222, as well as laws applicable to the APRN's practice setting that are outside of the BON's jurisdiction must also be followed.
- Each nurse must be able to support how his/her clinical judgments and nursing actions were aligned with the NPA and Board Rules. The Board recommends nurses use the Six-Step Decision-Making Model for Determining Nursing Scope of Practice when trying to determine if a given task is within the individual nurse's abilities. Congruence with standards adopted by national nursing specialty organizations may further serve to enhance and support the nurse's decision to perform a particular task.

The nurse, by virtue of a rigorous process of education and examination leading to either LVN or RN licensure, is accountable to the Board to assure that nursing care meets standards of safety and effectiveness.

Therefore, it is the position of the Board that each licensed nurse upholds his/her duty to maintain client safety by practicing within the parameters of the NPA and Board Rules as they apply to each licensee.

(Adopted 01/2005; revised 01/2007)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.15 Board's Jurisdiction Over Nursing Titles And Practice

An individual who holds licensure as a licensed vocational nurse (LVN) or as a registered professional nurse (RN) in Texas is responsible and accountable to adhere to the Nursing Practice Act and Board Rules which have the force of law with regard to licensed nursing practice in the state of Texas. Standards of Nursing Practice (§217.11(1)(T)) require that each nurse practice within the level of his/her educational preparation, experience, knowledge, and physical and emotional ability. The Standards of Nursing Practice establish the nurse's duty to the client. This "duty" requires the nurse to intervene appropriately to protect and promote the health and well being of the client or others for whom the nurse is responsible [§217.11(1)(B)].

RNs Functioning in LVN Positions/ RNs or LVNs Functioning in Unlicensed Positions

The Nursing Practice Act (NPA) and Board Rules do not preclude a RN from seeking employment in lower positions (such as LVN, unlicensed, or technical positions), with purportedly fewer responsibilities. The Board holds a licensed registered professional nurse, who is working in a lower level position, responsible and accountable to the level of education and competency of a RN. Likewise, a LVN working as an unlicensed person is responsible and accountable to the educational preparation and knowledge of a LVN. This expectation does not apply to individuals formerly licensed as LVNs or RNs whose nursing license has been retired, placed on inactive status, surrendered, or revoked.

Use of the Title "LVN" or "RN" when Providing Related Services

The use of the titles "Licensed Vocational Nurse," or "LVN," or "Registered Nurse," "RN," or any designation tending to imply that one is a licensed nurse is limited to those individuals appropriately licensed by the Board. The use of titles implying that an individual holds licensure as a nurse in the State of Texas is restricted by law (Tex. Occ. Code Ann. § 301.351, and Board Rule, 22 Tex. Admin. Code § 217.10). Use of any protected nursing title by an individual who is not duly licensed as either a LVN or RN in Texas, or who does not hold a valid compact license to practice nursing poses a potential threat to public safety related to this act of deception and misrepresentation to the public who may be seeking the services of a licensed nurse.

In the opinion of the Board, the expressed or implied use of the title "LVN," or "RN," or any other title that implies nursing licensure requires compliance with the NPA and Board Rules. As stated in Rule 217.11(1)(A), the nurse is accountable to adhere to any state, local, or federal laws impacting the nurse's practice setting.

(Board Action 09/1998; revised. 01/2001; revised 01/2003; revised 01/2004; revised 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.16 Development of Nursing Educational Programs

Approval of nursing education programs is one of the primary functions of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) in order to fulfill its mission to protect and promote the welfare of the people of Texas. The Texas BON has the responsibility and legal authority to decide whether a proposed new nursing educational program can meet the Board's established minimum standards for educational programs. These standards require adequate human, fiscal, and physical resources, including qualified nursing faculty and clinical learning facilities, in order to initiate and sustain a program that prepares graduates to practice competently and safely as nurses.

The Texas BON recognizes that when health care facilities experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining sufficient nurses, educational institutions and facilities within the affected geographical region frequently respond to this workforce need by proposing to develop new nursing educational programs.

Guidelines for Establishing a New Vocational or Professional Nursing Educational Program

Entities desiring to start a nursing educational program that are not approved as a school/college, must establish a school/college identity and be approved by Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as a career school or college (proprietary school) prior to seeking approval for the proposed nursing educational program.

All new pre-licensure vocational and professional nursing educational programs in Texas must be approved/licensed by either the TWC or the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), as applicable, unless deemed exempt from approval/licensing by the TWC or the THECB; and must also be approved by the Texas BON before enrolling students in the program. A new school of nursing or educational program that is deemed exempt from approval/licensing by the TWC or THECB, must still be approved by the Texas BON before enrolling students in the program.

All diploma nursing education programs in Texas, including new diploma nursing educational programs, must submit to the Texas BON a written plan addressing the legislative mandate that all nursing diploma programs in Texas have a process in place by 2015 to ensure that graduates of the program are entitled to receive a degree from a public or private institution of higher education accredited by an agency recognized by the THECB and at a minimum, entitle a graduate of the diploma program to receive an associate degree in nursing as required by §215.3(a)(1)(G) and §215.4(a)(6), adopted on February 19, 2008.

Process for Proposal Approval/Denial

A proposal to establish a new vocational nursing educational program or a new professional nursing educational program must follow Texas BON Rules & Regulations in Chapter 214 for Vocational Nursing Education or Chapter 215 for Professional Nursing Education. The institution seeking to establish the new nursing education program must have the appropriate accreditation/approval and the proposal must be prepared by a nurse with educational credentials and experience as outlined in the above mentioned rules. The proposal should include, but not be limited to, extensive rationale which supports establishing the new nursing education program with demographic and community data, employment needs for nurses in the area, evidence of support from stakeholders, and acceptable curricular items as identified in the guidelines.



The Texas BON education guidelines for developing a proposal to establish a new vocational or professional nursing educational program are available on the Texas BON web site under the Nursing Education link. An initial approval fee shall be submitted with the proposal [Rule 223.1(a)(9)].

The process for proposal approval/denial may take up to one year after the initial contact is made with the Texas BON. The amount of time it takes for Board approval of a proposal for a new program is dependent on many factors. For example, an entity establishing a brand new program may require more time to acquire all of the necessary resources than an established entity that already has other established programs. Additionally, depending on the expertise of the proposal author, a proposal may require several revisions before it is deemed acceptable by Board staff to be presented to the Board at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

After the proposal is determined to be ready to be presented to the Board, a preliminary survey visit will be conducted by Board staff. A public hearing will be held at the Board meeting prior to the Board's discussion of the proposal and the Board's decision. The Board may approve the proposal and grant initial approval to the new program, may defer action on the proposal, or may deny further consideration of the proposal.

(Board Action 07/2000; revised 01/2004; revised 01/2005; revised 10/2008)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.17 Board of Nursing/Board of Pharmacy, Joint Position Statement, Medication Error

Medication errors occur when a drug has been inappropriately prescribed, dispensed, or administered. Medication errors are a multifaceted problem which may occur in any health care setting. Consistent with their common mission to promote and protect the welfare of the people of Texas, the Board of Nursing and the Board of Pharmacy issued this joint statement for the purpose of increasing awareness of some of the factors which contribute to medication errors. The Boards note that there are numerous publications available which examine the many facets of this problem, and agree that all elements must be examined in order to identify and successfully correct the problem. This position paper has been jointly developed because the Boards acknowledge the interdisciplinary nature of medication errors and the variety of settings in which these errors may occur. These settings may include hospitals, community pharmacies, doctors' offices/clinics, long-term care facilities, clients' homes, and other locations.

Traditionally, medication errors have been attributed to the individual practitioner. However, reports such as the recently published Institute of Medicine's "To Err Is Human: Building a Safer Health System," suggest the majority of medical errors do not result from individual recklessness, but from basic flaws in the way the health system is organized. It is the joint position of the Boards that a comprehensive and varied approach is necessary to reduce the occurrence of errors. The Boards agree that the comprehensive approach includes three major elements: (1) the individual professional's knowledge of practice; (2) resources available to the professional; and (3) systems designs, problems and failures. Each of these three elements of this comprehensive approach are discussed below.

Professional competence has long been targeted as a source of health care professional errors. To reduce the probability of errors, all professionals must accept only those assignments for which they have the appropriate education and which they can safely perform. Professionals must continually expand their knowledge and remain current in their specialty, as well as be alerted to new medications, technologies and procedures in their work settings. Professionals must be able to identify when they need assistance, and then seek appropriate instruction and clarification. Professionals should evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their practice and strive to improve performance. This ultimate accountability on the part of individual practitioners is a critical element in reducing the incidence of medication errors.

The second element (resources available to all professionals) centers on the concept of team work and the work environment. The team should be defined as all health care personnel within any setting. Health care professionals must not be reluctant to seek out and utilize each other as resources. This is especially important for the new professional and/or the professional in transition. Taking the time to learn about the resources available in any practice setting is the individual professional's responsibility, and can help decrease the occurrence of medication errors. Adequate staffing and availability of experienced professionals are key factors in the delivery of safe effective medication therapy. In addition, health care organizations have the responsibility to develop complete and thorough orientation for all employees, maintain adequate and updated policies and procedures as guidelines for practice, and offer relevant opportunities for continuing staff development.

Analysis of the third element (systems designs, problems and failures) may demand creative and/or innovative thinking specific to each setting as well as a commitment to guarantee client safety. Systems which may have been in place for a long period of time may need to be re-examined for effectiveness. New information and technological advances must always be taken into account, and input should be solicited from all professionals. In addition, the system should contain a comprehensive quality program



for the purpose of detecting and preventing problems and failures. The quality program must encourage all health care professionals to be alert for problems encountered in their daily tasks and to advocate for changes when necessary. In addition, the quality program should include a method of reporting all errors and problems within the system, a system for tracking and analysis of the errors, and an interdisciplinary review of the incident(s). Eliminating systems problems is vital in promoting optimal performance. The table on the following page, while not an exhaustive list, specifies areas which can be reviewed when medication errors occur. These areas encompass all three of the aforementioned contributing elements to the problem of medication errors and can be applied to individuals or systems. Communication is a common thread basic to all of these factors. Effective verbal or written communication is fundamental to successfully resolving breakdowns, either individual or system wide, that frequently contribute to medication errors.

The Boards agree that health care regulatory entities must remain focused on public safety. It is imperative that laws and rules are relevant to today's practice environment and that appropriate mechanisms are in place to address medication errors. The complex nature of the problem requires that there be a comprehensive approach to reducing these errors. It is vital to the public welfare that medication errors be identified, addressed, and reduced.

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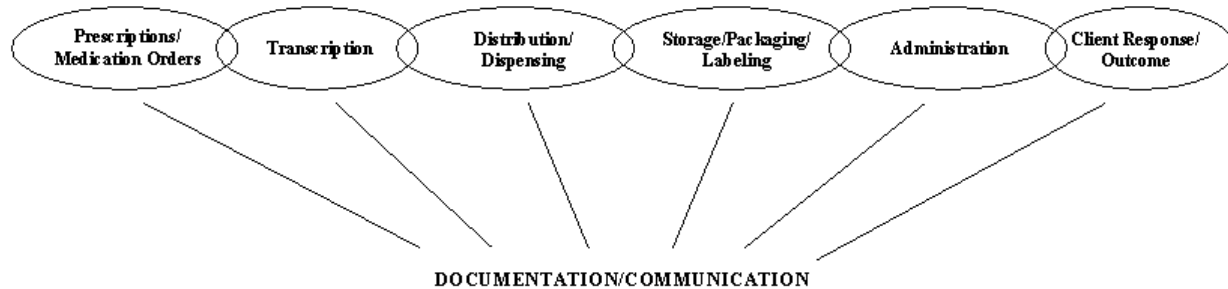
Texas Pharmacy Act, Texas Occupations Code, Chapters 551 - 566.

(Board Action 10/2000)

(Reviewed - 01/2009)



Position Statement 15.17 Table: Factors Contributing to Medication Errors



Schematization of a chain representing the interdependent nature of these elements, a weakness in any link impacts the entire system.

Prescriptions/ Medication Orders	Transcription	Distribution/ Dispensing	Storage/Packaging/ Labeling	Administration	Client Response/Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Accurate assessments/diagnoses * Awareness of allergies, contraindications, and drug reactions/interactions * Correct drug/dose/ route of administration * Clear and legible documentation of order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Clarification of orders (written/verbal) if needed * Clear and legible handwriting * Accurate and complete transcription (e.g. MAR, Kardex, Computer) * Proofreading of all transcriptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Clarification of orders if needed * Correct client/drug/dose/route * Checking expiration dates * Medication preparations (mixing of intravenous solutions, correct pill count) * Clear and legible audit trail * Client teaching and verification of understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Careful review of instructions for use/warnings/precautions * Checking expiration dates * Storage to avoid inadvertent mixups/ location of bottles which are similar in appearance * Accurate/legible and complete labeling on original containers * Careful attention to floor stock expiration dates/mixing instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Assessment of client status * Five rights of medication administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Right patient - Right medication - Right Dose - Right time - Right route * Client teaching and verification of understanding * Accurate documentation of medication administration (MAR/client records/narcotics log) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Assessment of efficacy/adverse reactions * Client compliance * Documentation



15.18 Nurses Carrying out Orders from Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) are registered nurses who hold authorization from the board to practice as advanced practice registered nurses based on completion of an advanced educational program acceptable to the Board. The term includes a nurse practitioner, nurse-midwife, nurse anesthetist, and a clinical nurse specialist. The advanced practice registered nurse is prepared to practice in an expanded role to provide health care to individuals, families, and/or groups in a variety of settings, including, but not limited to, homes, hospitals, institutions, offices, industry, schools, community agencies, public and private clinics, and private practice. The advanced practice registered nurse acts independently and/or in collaboration with other health care professionals in the delivery of health care services. Advanced practice registered nurses utilize mechanisms, including Protocols or other written authorization, that provide them with the authority to provide medical aspects of care, including the ordering of dangerous drugs, controlled substances, or devices that bear or are required to bear the legend: "Caution: federal law prohibits dispensing without a prescription" or "RX only" or any other legend that complies with federal law. The Protocols or other written authorization may vary in complexity based on the educational preparation and advanced practice experience of the individual advanced practice registered nurse. Protocols or other written authorization are not required to describe the exact steps that an advanced practice registered nurse must take with respect to each specific condition, disease, or symptom. Protocols or other written authorization are not required for nursing aspects of care.

The Board recognizes that in many settings, nurses and advanced practice registered nurses work together in a collegial relationship. A nurse may carry out an advanced practice registered nurse's order in the management of a patient, including, but not limited to, the administration of treatments, orders for laboratory or diagnostic testing, or medication orders. A physician is not required to be physically present at the location where the advanced practice registered nurse is providing care. The order is not required to be countersigned by the physician. The advanced practice registered nurse must function within the accepted scope of practice of the role and specialty in which he/she has been authorized by the Board.

As with any order, the nurse must seek clarification if he/she believes the order is inappropriate, inaccurate, nonefficacious or contraindicated by consulting with the advanced practice registered nurse or the physician as appropriate. The Nurse carrying out an order from an advanced practice registered nurse is responsible and accountable for his/her actions just as he/she would be with any physician order.

(Board Action, 01/2001; revised 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.19 Nurses Carrying out Orders from Pharmacists for Drug Therapy Management

In response to Senate Bill 659 enacted in 1995 during the 74th Legislative Session, the Texas State Board of Pharmacy and the Texas Medical Board (TMB) entered into a joint rule-making effort to elaborate the processes by which a pharmacist could engage in drug therapy management (DTM) as delegated by a physician. The result of this joint effort was the adoption of rules by both the Pharmacy Board [22 TAC §295.13, 1997], and the Texas Medical Board's [22 TAC §193.7, 1999]. The Texas Medical Board amended its rules subsequent to the adoption of §157.101 *Delegation to Pharmacist*, in the Medical Practice Act during the 76th Legislative Session (1999).

According to definitions listed in the Pharmacy Act [Tex. Occ. Code Ann. § 551.003], the "Practice of Pharmacy" includes "(F) performing for a patient a specific act of drug therapy management (DTM) delegated to a pharmacist by a written protocol from a physician licensed in this state in compliance with Subtitle B." The Pharmacy rules further define DTM as "the performance of specific acts by pharmacists as authorized by a physician through written protocol." [22 TAC § 295.13(b)(4)]. Rule 295.13(b)(6) further adds the clarification that a "written protocol is a physician's order, standing medical order, standing delegation order, or other order or protocol as defined by rule of the Texas Medical Board under the Medical Practice Act." The TMB's Rule [22 TAC §§ 193.7] reflects similar language to the Pharmacy Board rules.

Nurses frequently communicate and collaborate with both the client's physician and the pharmacist in providing optimal care to clients. It is, therefore, the Board's position that a nurse may carry out orders written by a pharmacist for DTM provided the order originates from a written protocol authorized by a physician. Any nurse carrying out DTM orders from a pharmacist may wish to review the TMB Rule 193, *Physician Delegation*, in its entirety. The components of the rule related to physician delegation for a pharmacist to engage in DTM are set forth in §193.7(e) as follows:

(1) A written protocol must contain at a minimum the following listed in subparagraphs (A)-(E) of this paragraph:

(A) a statement identifying the individual physician authorized to prescribe drugs and responsible for the delegation of drug therapy management;

(B) a statement identifying the individual pharmacist authorized to dispense drugs and to engage in drug therapy management as delegated by the physician;

(C) a statement identifying the types of drug therapy management decisions that the pharmacist is authorized to make which shall include:

(i) a statement of the ailments or diseases, drugs, and type of drug therapy management authorized; and

(ii) a specific statement of the procedures, decision criteria, or plan the pharmacist shall follow when exercising drug therapy management authority;

(D) a statement of the activities the pharmacist shall follow in the course of exercising drug therapy management authority, including the method for documenting decisions made and



a plan for communication or feedback to the authorizing physician concerning specific decisions made. Documentation shall be recorded within a reasonable time of each intervention and may be performed on the patient medication record, patient medical chart, or in a separate log book; and

(E) a statement that describes appropriate mechanisms and time schedule for the pharmacist to report to the physician monitoring the pharmacist's exercise of delegated drug therapy management and the results of the drug therapy management.

(2) A standard protocol may be used, or the attending physician may develop a drug therapy management protocol for the individual patient. If a standard protocol is used, the physician shall record, what deviations if any, from the standard protocol are ordered for that patient (22 Tex. Admin. Code §193.7(e)).

The protocol under which a pharmacist initiates DTM orders for a patient should be available to the nurse at the facility, agency, or organization in which it is carried out. As with any order, the nurse must seek clarification if he/she believes the order is inappropriate, inaccurate, nonefficacious or contraindicated by contacting the pharmacist and/or the physician who authorized the DTM protocol as appropriate (22 Tex. Admin. Code §217.11(1)(N)). The nurse carrying out an order for DTM written by a pharmacist is responsible and accountable for his/her actions just as he/she would be with any physician order.

(Board Action 01/2002; revised 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.20 Registered Nurses in the Management of an Unwitnessed Arrest in a Resident in a Long Term Care Facility

The Board of Nursing (BON) has approved this position statement in an effort to provide guidance to registered nurses in long term care facilities and to clarify issues of compassionate end-of-life care. The Texas Nurses Association (TNA) through its Long Term Care (LTC) Committee has identified that registered nurses have expressed repeated concern about the inappropriate initiation of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) when a resident without a "do not resuscitate" order (DNR) experiences an unwitnessed arrest. There is growing sentiment on the part of the long term care nurse community that the initiation of CPR would appear futile and inappropriate given the nursing assessment of the resident.

The nursing community generally considers that initiation of CPR in such cases is not compassionate, and is not consistent with standards requiring the use of a systematic approach to provide individualized, goal directed nursing care [BON Standards of Nursing Practice, 22 TAC § 217.11(3)]. This position statement is intended to provide guidance, for nurses, in the management of an unwitnessed resident arrest without a DNR order in a long term care (LTC) setting. The position also addresses the related issues of:

- Obligation (or duty) of the nurse to the resident,
- Expectation of supportive policies and procedures in LTC facilities,
- The RN role in pronouncement of death.

These related issues are addressed in this position statement because the BON is often required to investigate cases of death where it appears there is a lack of clarity about a nurse's obligation when there is no DNR order.

The BON will evaluate cases involving the failure of a RN to initiate CPR in the absence of a DNR based on the following premise:

A DNR is a medical order that must be given by a physician and in the absence thereof, it is generally outside the standard of nursing practice to determine that CPR will not be initiated.

However, there may be instances when LTC residents without a DNR order experience an unwitnessed arrest, and it is clear according to the nursing assessment that CPR intervention would be a futile and inappropriate intervention given the condition of the resident.

In the case of an unwitnessed resident arrest without DNR orders, determination of the appropriateness of CPR initiation should be undertaken by the nurse through a resident assessment, and interventions appropriate to the findings initiated.

Assessment of death in which CPR would be a futile and inappropriate intervention requires that all seven of the following signs be present and that the arrest is unwitnessed.

Presumptive Signs of Death

1. The resident is unresponsive,
2. The resident has no respirations,



3. The resident has no pulse,
4. Resident's pupils are fixed and dilated,
5. The resident's body temperature indicates hypothermia: skin is cold relative to the residents baseline skin temperature,
6. The resident has generalized cyanosis, and

Conclusive Sign of Death

7. There is presence of livor mortis (venous pooling of blood in dependent body parts causing purple discoloration of the skin which does blanch with pressure).

There may be other circumstances and assessments that could influence a decision on the part of the nurse not to initiate CPR. However, evaluation of the prudence of such a decision would occur on a case-by-case basis by the BON.

Documentation

After assessment of the resident is completed and appropriate interventions are taken, documentation of the circumstances and the assessment of the resident in the resident record are a requirement. The rules of the board of nursing establish legal documentation standards, [BON Standards of Professional Nursing Practice, TAC § Rule 217.11 (1)(D)]. Examples of important documentation elements include:

- Description of the discovery of the resident
- Any treatment of the resident that was undertaken
- The findings for each of the assessment elements outlined in the standards
- All individuals notified of the resident's status (e.g., 9-1-1, the health care provider, the administrator of the facility, family, coroner, etc.)
- Any directions that were provided to staff or others during the assessment and/or treatment of the resident
- The results of any communications
- Presence or absence of witnesses

Documentation should be adequate to give a clear picture of the situation and all of the actions that were taken or not taken on behalf of the resident.

Even if the nurse's decision not to initiate CPR was appropriate, failure to document can result in an action against a nurse's license by the BON. Furthermore, lack of documentation places the nurse at a disadvantage should the nurse be required to explain the circumstances of the resident's death. Nurses should be aware that actions documented at the time of death provide a much more credible defense than needing to prove actions not appropriately documented were actually taken.

Obligation ("Duty") of the Nurse to the Resident

Whether CPR is initiated or not, it is important for the nurse to understand that she/he may be held accountable if the nurse failed to meet standards of care to assure the safety of the resident, prior to the arrest such as:

- Failure to monitor the resident's physiologic status;



- Failure to document changes in the resident's status and to adjust the plan of care based on the resident assessment;
- Failure to implement appropriate interventions which might be required to stabilize a client's condition such as: reporting changes in the resident's status to the resident's primary care provider and obtaining appropriate orders;
- Failure to implement procedures or protocols that could reasonably be expected to improve the resident's outcome.

Care Planning and Advanced Directives

Proactive policies and procedures, that acknowledge the importance of care planning with the inclusion of advanced directives, are also important. Evidence indicates that establishing the resident's wishes at the end of life and careful care planning prevents confusion on the part of staff and assures that the resident's and family's wishes in all aspects of end of life care are properly managed.

The admission process to long term care facilities in Texas requires that residents be provided information on self-determination and given the option to request that no resuscitation efforts be made in the event of cardiac and/or respiratory arrest. Facilities are required to have policies and adequate resources to assure that every resident and resident's family upon admission to a long term care facility not only receive such information, but have sufficient support to make an informed decision about end of life issues.

It is further expected that advanced care planning is an ongoing component of every resident's care and that the nursing staff should know the status of such planning on each resident.

The Board recognizes that end of life decisions on the part of residents and families can be difficult. However, the Board believes that principled and ethical discussion about the CPR issue with the resident and family, is an essential element of the resident care plan.

RN Role in Pronouncement of Death

Texas law provides for RN pronouncement of death [Health & Safety Code §§ 671.001-.002]. The law requires that in order for a nurse to pronounce death, the facility must have a written policy which is jointly developed and approved by the medical staff or medical consultant and the nursing staff, specifying under what circumstances a RN can make a pronouncement of death.

It is important that nurses understand that the assessment that death has occurred and that CPR is not an appropriate intervention are not the equivalent to the pronouncement of death. Texas statutory law governs who can pronounce death, and only someone legally authorized to pronounce death may do so. If the RN does not have the authority to pronounce death, upon assessment of death the RN must notify a person legally authorized to pronounce death.

Conclusion

This position statement is intended to guide nurses in long term care facilities who encounter an unwitnessed resident arrest without a DNR order. It is hoped that by clarifying the responsibility of the nurse, and through the use of supportive facility policies and procedures, that nurses will be better able to provide compassionate end of life care.



Qualifier to Position

The BON evaluates "failure to initiate CPR cases" based on the premise that in the absence of a physician's DNR order it is generally outside the standard of nursing practice not to initiate CPR. Consequently, RNs deciding not to initiate CPR when all seven signs of death are not present must assure themselves that not initiating CPR complies with their respective standards of practice. Depending on the circumstances, a nurse's failure to initiate CPR when all seven signs are not present may constitute failure to comply with standards of nursing care. This position statement is limited to situations when all seven signs are present and should not be construed as providing guidance on the appropriateness of not initiating CPR when all seven signs are not present.

(Approved by the Board of Nursing on October 24, 2002; revised 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.21 [Deleted 01/2005]



15.22 APRNs Providing Medical Aspects of Care for Themselves or Others with Whom there is a Close Personal Relationship

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses often find themselves in situations where they may feel compelled to provide medical aspects of care or prescribe medications for themselves, their family members, or other individuals with whom they have a close personal relationship. Such practices raise a number of ethical questions. The Board is concerned that advanced practice registered nurses in these situations risk allowing their personal feelings to cloud their professional judgment and objectivity. It is the opinion of the Board of Nursing that advanced practice registered nurses should not provide medical treatment or prescribe medications for themselves or any individual with whom they have a close personal relationship.

(Board Action 10/2003)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.23 The RN's Use of Complementary Modalities

Nursing is a dynamic profession. The scope of practice for one RN may differ from the scope of practice for another RN; therefore, it is impractical to create an exhaustive listing of all tasks that may or may not be performed by a registered nurse in any setting. According to the Nursing Practice Act (NPA) for the State of Texas, Section 301.002(2), "professional nursing" is defined, in part, as focused on the maintenance of health or prevention of illness through nursing practices that may include assessment, intervention, evaluation, rehabilitation, and/or the care, counsel, and health education of a person who is ill, injured, infirm, or experiencing a change in normal health processes. These nursing actions may be independent or collaborative. A number of complementary therapeutic modalities have long been incorporated into standard nursing practice to assist patients in meeting identified health needs and goals. Educational preparation to practice complementary modalities may be acquired through formal academic programs or continuing education.

Depending upon the practice setting and modality considered, complementary modalities may be used alone or in conjunction with conventional modalities.

Regardless of practice setting, the professional registered nurse who wishes to incorporate the use of complementary modalities into his/her professional nursing practice is accountable and responsible to adhere to the Nursing Practice Act, Rules, and Regulations Relating to Professional Nurse Education, Licensure and Practice.

Rules that are particularly relevant to RNs who integrate complementary therapies into professional nursing practice include rule 217.10, *Restrictions to Use of Designations for Licensed Vocational or Registered Nurse*, which requires a registered nurse who uses the title "RN" (either expressed or implied) to comply with the NPA and Board Rules. In addition, rule 217.11, *Standards of Nursing Practice*, forms the foundation for safe nursing practice and establishes the RN's duty to his/her clients. While all standards apply when engaging in the practice of professional registered nursing, those standards most applicable to the RN who engages in complementary modalities include §217.11(1), standards (A)-(D), (F), (G), (R), and (T), and §217.11(3)(A). Additional standards may apply depending upon the specific practice situation. In order to show accountability when providing integrated or complementary modalities as nursing interventions, the RN should be able to articulate and provide evidence of:

1. Educational activities used to gain or maintain the knowledge and skills needed for the safe and effective use of such modalities;
2. Knowledge of the anticipated effects of the complementary therapy and its interactions with other modalities, including its physiological, emotional/spiritual impact;
3. Selection of appropriate interventions, whether complementary, conventional, or in combination, to meet the client's needs. The interventions and rationale for selection should be documented in the client's nursing care plan. The demonstrated ability of the RN to properly perform the chosen intervention(s) should be maintained by the RN and/or his/her employer;
4. Instruction/education provided regarding the purpose of the selected intervention, e.g., how it is performed, and its potential outcomes;



5. Collaboration with other health care professionals and applicable referrals when necessary;
6. Documentation of interventions and client responses in a client's record;
7. Development and/or maintenance of policies and procedures relative to complementary modalities when used in organized health care settings;
8. Abstinence from making unsubstantiated claims about the therapy used; and
9. Acknowledgment that, as with conventional modalities, each person's response to the therapy will be unique.

While some complementary therapies, such as massage, have long been within the realm of nursing, there is a much broader connotation applied when a RN holds himself/herself out as a registered or certified practitioner of such a therapy. "Registered" or "certified" titles imply a degree of mastery above those basic skills acquired through a pre-licensure nursing program. The RN is accountable to hold the proper credentials (e.g., license, registration, certificate, etc.) to safely engage in the specific practice. The Six-Step Decision Making Model (accessible on the BON web page) may be a useful tool for the RN who is uncertain whether a given modality is within his/her scope of practice. The professional registered nurse who wishes to integrate complementary modalities when engaging in the practice of nursing should be familiar with not only the NPA and BON rules, but also any prevailing standards published by national associations, credentialing bodies, and professional nursing organizations related to the RN's area of practice.

(Board Action 01/2004; revised 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.24 Nurses Engaging In Reinsertion of Permanently Placed Feeding Tubes

The Board approved curriculum for both vocational nurses and registered nurses does not provide graduates with sufficient instruction to ascertain that a nurse has the necessary knowledge, skills and ability to re-insert and determine correct placement of a permanently placed feeding tube (such as a gastrostomy or jejunostomy tubes). The Board does allow LVNs and RNs to expand their practice beyond the basic educational preparation through post-licensure continuing education and training for certain tasks and procedures. One of the main considerations in determining whether or not a nurse should consider re-insertion of a gastrostomy, jejunostomy or similar feeding tube is how long the original tube was in place before becoming dislodged. Though sources vary, most give a range of 8-12 weeks for maturation/healing of the fistulous tract and stoma formation. The method of initial insertion (surgical, endoscopy, or radiographic guidance) may impact the length of healing. Orders should be obtained from the patient's physician regarding re-insertion guidelines.

It is the opinion of the Board that LVNs and RNs should not engage in the reinsertion of a permanently placed feeding tube through an established tract until the LVN or RN successfully completes a competency validation course congruent with prevailing nursing practice standards. Training should provide instruction on the nursing knowledge and skills applicable to tube replacement and verification of correct and incorrect placement. The Board of Nursing (BON) does not define nor set qualifications for competency validation courses; however, inclusion of the following factors is encouraged:

1. The nurse should complete training designed specifically for the type or types of permanent feeding tubes the nurse may need to replace, including overall patient assessment, verification of proper tube placement, and assessment of the tube insertion site.
2. A registered nurse or a physician who has the necessary expertise with regard to the specific feeding tube provides supervision during the training process.
3. The nurse demonstrates competency in all appropriate aspects (knowledge, decision-making, and psycho-motor skills) of performing the procedure.
4. The patient has an established tract. The established tract is not determined by the nurse.
5. The facility has resources available to develop an educational program for initial instruction of LVNs and/or RNs, as well as for ongoing competency validation.
6. Documentation of each nurse's initial education and ongoing competency validation should be maintained by the nurse and/or the employer in accordance with facility policies.
7. Regardless of training, policies and procedures of the facility must also permit the nurse to engage in the procedure.

The nurse who accepts an assignment to engage in care and/or replacement of permanently placed feeding tubes is responsible to adhere to the NPA and Board rules, particularly §217.11, *Standards of Nursing Practice*, as well as any other standards or rules applicable to the nurse's practice setting. Two standards applicable in all practice scenarios include:

- §217.11(1)(B) "implement measures to promote a safe environment for clients and others;" and



- §217.11(1)(T) “accept only those assignments that take into consideration client safety and that are commensurate with the nurse’s educational preparation, experience, knowledge, and physical and emotional ability.”

Additional standards in Rule 217.11 that may be applicable when a nurse chooses to engage in replacement of a permanently placed feeding tube include (but are not limited to):

- (1)(D) “Accurately and completely report and document: (i) ..client status....(ii) nursing care rendered...(iii) physician, dentist or podiatrist orders...(iv) administration of medications and treatments....(v) client response(s)....,”
- (1)(G) “Obtain instruction and supervision as necessary when implementing nursing procedures or practices,”
- (1)(H) “Make a reasonable effort to obtain orientation/training for competency when encountering new equipment and technology or unfamiliar care situations,”
- (1)(R) “Be responsible for one’s own continuing competence in nursing practice and individual professional growth.”
- Standards specific to LVNs may be found in §217.11(2); standards specific to RNs may be found in §217.11(3).

Regardless of facility policy or physicians’ orders, the nurse always has a duty to maintain the safety of the patient [Reference 217.11(1)(B) above]; this standard has previously been upheld in a landmark case (*Lunsford vs. Board of Nurse Examiners*, 648 S.W. 2d 391 (Tex. App. -- Austin 1983).

(Adopted 01/2005)
(Reviewed - 01/2009)



15.25 Administration of Medication & Treatments by LVNs

The definition of "Vocational Nursing" as amended in the Texas Occupations Code by SB1000 (79th Regular Session, 2005) states:

301.002(5): "Vocational Nursing" means a directed scope of nursing practice, including the performance of an act that requires specialized judgment and skill, the proper performance of which is based on knowledge and application of the principles of biological, physical, and social science as acquired by a completed course in an approved school of vocational nursing. The term does not include acts of medical diagnosis or the prescription of therapeutic or corrective measures. Vocational nursing involves:

- (A) collecting data and performing focused nursing assessments of the health status of an individual;
- (B) participating in the planning of the nursing care needs of an individual;
- (C) participating in the development and modification of the nursing care plan;
- (D) participating in health teaching and counseling to promote, attain, and maintain the optimum health level of an individual;
- (E) assisting in the evaluation of an individual's response to a nursing intervention and the identification of an individual's needs; and
- (F) engaging in other acts that require education and training, as prescribed by board rules and policies, commensurate with the nurse's experience, continuing education, and demonstrated competency.

Educational preparation leading to initial licensure as a nurse in Texas is described in the *Differentiated Entry Level Competencies (DELIC) of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs (Sept 2002)*. This document lists the minimum competency expectations for graduates of Vocational (VN), Diploma/Associate Degree (DIP/ADN), and Baccalaureate (BSN) nursing programs. According to DELIC, educational preparation for Vocational Nurses includes the following related to administration of medications:

Knowledge:

- Properties, effects, and basic principles underlying the use and administration of pharmacotherapeutic agents.

Clinical Behavior/Judgments:

- Administer medications and treatments and perform procedures safely, and
- Monitor, document, and report responses to medications, treatments, and procedures and communicate the same to other health care professionals clearly and accurately.

The Standards of Nursing Practice (§217.11) applicable to LVNs (as well as RNs) includes the following standards that specifically relate to medication administration:

- (1)(C) Know the rationale for and effects of medications and treatments, and shall correctly administer the same;



- (1)(D) Accurately and completely report and document...(iv) administration of medications and treatments;
- (1)(N) Clarify any order or treatment regimen that the nurse has reason to believe is inaccurate, non-efficacious or contraindicated by consulting with the appropriate licensed practitioner and notifying the ordering practitioner when the nurse makes the decision not to administer the medication or treatment.

[Note that other standards may apply to administration of medications within a given practice circumstance.]

The Board's position, therefore, is that LVNs are educationally prepared to administer medications and treatments as ordered by a physician, podiatrist, dentist, or any other practitioner legally authorized to prescribe the ordered medication. LVNs may also administer medications and treatments ordered by PAs and APNs as established under Position Statements 15.1 and 15.18, relating to nurses accepting orders from Physician Assistants (PAs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), respectively.

As with other practice tasks, the Board cannot provide a list of medications, routes of administration, or other specific information that may be relevant to determining whether or not a task is within the scope of practice for a LVN. What is within the scope of practice for one LVN may not be within the scope of practice for another LVN. The following documents on the Board's web page may be helpful for a LVN concerned about his/her scope of practice for administration of medications or other nursing practices:

- Interpretive Guideline for LVN Scope of Practice:
 - <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/practice/lvn-guide.html>
- Six-Step Decision-Making Model for Determining Nursing Scope of Practice:
 - <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/practice/pdfs/dectree.pdf>
- Rule 217.11, Standards of Nursing Practice:
 - [http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=22&pt=11&ch=217&rl=11](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=22&pt=11&ch=217&rl=11)
- Lists of Tasks a Nurse Can/Cannot Perform:
 - <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/practice/faq-nursetasks.html>
- Position Statements: <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/practice/position.html>
 - Position Statement 15.3, LVNS Engaging in Intravenous Therapy, Venipuncture, or PICC Lines: <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/practice/position.html#15.3>
 - Position Statement 15.8, Role of the Nurse in Moderate Sedation: <http://www.bon.state.tx.us/practice/position.html#15.8>