

Louisiana State Board of Nursing

DECLARATORY STATEMENT ON THE REGISTERED NURSE ASSISTING WITH PERIPHERAL NERVE BLOCKS

Preamble

Pursuant to questions posed to the Louisiana State Board of Nursing (the Board); board staff was charged with developing a declaratory statement relative to the Registered Nurses' (RN) role in assisting anesthesia providers with peripheral nerve blocks. The safety and welfare of the patient is given primary consideration as well as consideration to the role and responsibilities of the RN.

During the performance of a peripheral nerve block, the anesthesia provider is holding an imaging or ultrasound probe in one hand while guiding the placement of a needle with the second hand; therefore, an extra set of hands/ "third hand" is necessary to push the plunger of the syringe and inject the agents into the patient. The technical component of the procedure necessitates the RN's assistance in administration of the anesthetic agents.

Authority

In accord with LRS 37:913(14)(l) and LAC 46:XLVII.3703 RNs may perform additional activities beyond those taught in basic nursing education programs. Additionally, pursuant to LRS 49:963 and LAC 46:XLVII.3321, the Board is authorized to issue declaratory statements in response to requests for clarification of the effect of rules and regulations or of LRS 37:911 et seq. as revised and amended.

Position

The Board recognizes that it is within the role and scope of RNs to assist anesthesia providers in the administration of anesthetic agents during the performance of a peripheral nerve block provided that the RN is under the direct supervision of the anesthesia provider and that the RN has the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to do so. Institutional policy should establish specific parameters for the RN's role and duties in assisting with peripheral nerve blocks as well as processes for RN training, education, and ongoing competency. The RN who is not a CRNA is not to insert or otherwise place the needle. The RN may assist the anesthesia provider as a "third hand" for performing peripheral nerve blocks by aspirating and pushing the plunger of the syringe containing the anesthetic agents when directed to do so by and in the physical presence of the anesthesia provider.

This position statement does not address nor apply to continuous peripheral nerve blocks. Such provisions are in LAC 46:XLVII:3705. This position statement does not address nor apply to administration or monitoring of anesthesia for any other purpose other than the provision of a peripheral nerve block.

Definitions

Anesthesia provider - a CRNA or physician licensed and authorized to practice as an anesthesiologist or a physician licensed and authorized to provide nerve blocks within the scope of his/her practice and licensed specialty.

Direct supervision - the anesthesia provider is physically present at all times in the suite directly at the bedside where the procedure is being performed in which the assistance with administration of anesthetic agents is being provided by the RN.

Peripheral nerve block - a type of regional anesthesia that blocks the sensation of pain to a specific area or region.

Third hand - the role of RNs assisting with procedures described within this statement in which both of the anesthesia providers' hands are otherwise engaged in carrying out complex aspects of the procedure. These complex aspects of the procedure carried out by the anesthesia provider are otherwise outside of the scope of practice of the RN.

Conclusion

Assisting with administration of anesthetic agents during a peripheral nerve block is a specialized practice requiring specialized technical skills which are achieved and maintained through additional experience gained through performance of the procedure as well as education. The decision by an RN to assist in administration of anesthetic agents during a peripheral nerve block is to be made deliberately with an understanding of the professional accountability that the role requires. The RN is responsible and accountable for nursing functions related to the care of patients assigned to the RN. The RN must have the documented education and experience to provide the care required. Institutions must provide necessary policies and procedures delineating the details and parameters of care imparted to patients.

Adopted: April 14, 2016