

Louisiana State Board of Nursing

DECLARATORY STATEMENT ON THE LEGAL SCOPE OF THE PRACTICE OF A REGISTERED NURSE IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

LRS 37:913 (3) defines the legal scope of the practice of a registered nurse. Among the statutorily approved activities of a registered nurse are the supervision and instruction of personnel associated with nursing functions, and the delegation of nursing functions approved by the Board of Nursing. The Board has adopted administrative rules to regulate both the supervisory and delegatory activities of the registered nurse.

In addition to the Nurse Practice Act, other statutes specifically authorize the registered nurse to perform certain activities. In 1985, LRS 40:1234 was amended to provide for the registered nurse to supervise (act as a preceptor for) advanced emergency medical technician (EMT) students in a hospital participating in an approved training program for EMTs. LRS 40:1232A authorizes registered nurses to supervise and direct an ambulance service which would include the services of EMTs. However, there is no authorization for a registered nurse to supervise certified EMTs in a practice situation other than in pre-hospital settings and until care responsibility is assumed by the regular hospital staff.

Since EMTs, including paramedics, are not licensed to practice nursing, registered nurses who work with EMTs in situations other than pre-hospital settings must adhere to the administrative rules on the delegation of nursing functions to unlicensed personnel, LAC 46:XLVII.3703.a and d, which reads as follows:

- a. Any situation where tasks are delegated should meet the following criteria:
 - i. The person has been adequately trained for the task.
 - ii. The person has demonstrated that the task has been learned.
 - iii. The person can perform the task safely in the given nursing situation.
 - iv. The patient's status is safe for the person to carry out the task.
 - v. Appropriate supervision is available during the task implementation.
 - vi. The task is in an established policy of the nursing practice setting and the policy is written, recorded and available to all.

- d. Contingent upon the registered nurse's evaluation of each patient's condition and also upon the registered nurse's evaluation of the competency of each unlicensed nursing personnel, registered nurses may delegate non-complex tasks to unlicensed nursing personnel.

i. A non-complex task is one that can safely be performed according to exact directions, with no need to alter the standard procedure, and the results are predictable.

ii. A complex task is one that requires judgment to safely alter the standard procedure in accordance with the needs of the patient; or requires the consideration of a number of factors in order to perform the procedure; or requires judgment to determine how to proceed from one step to the next.

iii. The administration of medications is a complex task because it requires the consideration of number of factors and the formulation of judgments according to those factors.

LAC 46:XLVII.3331.H.12 provides that delegating nursing care, functions, tasks, or responsibilities to others contrary to regulations is a cause for disciplinary action against a registered nurse. Consequently, any registered nurse who accepts an assignment which involves the delegation of nursing functions to EMTs is at risk for disciplinary proceedings unless the delegation is in accord with the rules on the delegation of nursing functions.

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