Delegation Decision-Making Process
Licensed Practical Nurses/Unlicensed Nursing Personnel

Introduction:
The Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) has the legal responsibility to regulate the practice of nursing and to provide guidance regarding the delegation of nursing interventions by the Registered Nurse (RN) to other competent nursing personnel.

The authority to delegate varies from state-to-state. Louisiana, R.S. 37:913(14)(f) provides that registered nursing includes delegating nursing interventions to qualified nursing personnel in accordance with criteria established by the LSBN. LAC 46:XLVII.3703 sets the standards for the implementation of the statutory mandate.

The RN who delegates nursing interventions retains the responsibility and accountability to assure that the delegated intervention is performed in accord with established standards of practice, policies and procedures. Appropriate assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation are integral activities in the fulfillment of the RN’s responsibility and accountability.

Decision-Making Process:
The ‘Decision Tree for Delegation of Certain Tasks to Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)’ and the ‘Decision Tree for Delegation of Certain Tasks to Unlicensed Nursing Personnel (UNPs)’ graphically represent practical guidelines to direct the RN in the delegation decision-making process. Concurrent reference to the above-cited statutory and administrative mandates is essential to the appropriate utilization of this tool.

As one moves through the “Tree,” the following questions must be answered:

- **Is the task within the RN’s scope of practice?** Refer to the Louisiana Nurse Practice Act (i.e. Louisiana Revised Statutes) R.S. §37:913(14)(f); LSBN Rules and Regulations (i.e. Louisiana Administrative Code, Title 46:XLVII - Nurses) LAC 46:XLVII §3703; and interpretations of the statutes and rules by the LSBN (i.e. LSBN Declaratory Statements and LSBN Advisory Practice Opinions). If the task is not within the RN’s scope of practice, do not proceed with delegation.

- **Does the delegation of this task meet the requirements of the administrative rules on delegation?** Evaluate in accord with the Board’s rules on delegation. If the task and situation do not meet the criteria set in the rules, do not proceed with delegation.

- **Does the agency or nursing employer have written policies and procedures in place for this task?** Identify appropriate officially adopted policies and procedures. If these are absent, do not proceed until policies and procedures have been developed and duly promulgated/approved by personnel authorized by the agency/employer.

- **Has the LPN/UNP received training and has the validation of competency in performing task been documented?** Determine whether or not the task was included in the initial educational curriculum which prepared the LPN or UNP, learned later in an approved continuing education offering, workshop or in-service program authorized by the agency/employer. If not, do not proceed until the required education has been provided and there is documentation of competency validation.

- **If all of the above questions are “yes,” proceed with delegation.**
Decision Tree for Delegation of Certain Tasks to Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)

Is task within the RN’s scope of practice?

Yes

No

Do Not Proceed

Board’s Rules:
• the person has been adequately trained for the task;
• the person has demonstrated that the task has been learned;
• the person can perform the task safely in the given nursing situation;
• the patient’s status is safe for the person to carry out the task;
• appropriate supervision is available during the task implementation; and
• the task is in an established policy of the nursing practice setting and the policy is written, recorded and available to all.
• prescribed task requires a fixed body of knowledge, can be performed by following a defined procedure with minimal alteration, and responses of the individual to the task are predictable;
• change in the patient’s condition is predictable;
• medical and nursing orders are not subject to continuous change.

Does the agency have policies & procedures in place for this task?

Yes

No

Do Not Proceed

Has the LPN received training & documented validation of competency in performing task?

Yes

Proceed with delegation

No

No

Do not proceed until policies & procedures developed

Provide education & document initial & ongoing competency validation
Decision Tree for Delegation of Certain Tasks to Unlicensed Nursing Personnel (UNPs)

Yes

Is task within the RN’s scope of Practice?

Yes

No

Do Not Proceed

No

Do Not Proceed

Board's Rules:
- the person has been adequately trained for the task;
- the person has demonstrated that the task has been learned;
- the person can perform the task safely in the given nursing situation;
- the patient’s status is safe for the person to carry out the task;
- appropriate supervision is available during the task implementation; and
- the task is in an established policy of the nursing practice setting and the policy is written, recorded and available to all.

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.

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

Does the agency have policies & procedures in place for this task?

Yes

No

Do not proceed until policies & procedures developed

Has the person received training & documented validation of competency in performing task?

Yes

Provide education & document competency validation

No

No

Yes

Proceed with delegation