

Louisiana State Board of Nursing

Ellen T. Kyle, R. N.
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
President

MISS MERLYN M. MAILLIAN, R.N.
Executive Director

907 Pere Marquette Building
150 Baronne Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70112

December 19, 1980

Mary Butcalis, R. N.
Director of Nursing
Louisiana State University Medical Center
1541 Kings Highway
Shreveport, Louisiana 71130

Dear Ms. Butcalis:

The Board of Nursing held its scheduled meeting on December 11-12, 1980, at which meeting your request for a ruling from the Board was presented. Your question is:

Can a registered nurse supervise an unlicensed staff member for all but one aspect of her job performance allowing a physically present physician to assume responsibility for the unlicensed staff member administering topical ocular medication?

The Board reviewed our previous correspondence as well as your recent letter and attached position description. The Board's response to your current question is:

It is not possible for a registered nurse to be partially responsible for the nursing care rendered by herself/himself or by personnel who are under her/his supervision. The Legal Standards of Nursing Practice are based on the premise that the registered nurse is responsible for and accountable to the patient for the quality of nursing care which the patient receives regardless of whether intervention is provided solely by the registered nurse or by a registered nurse in conjunction with other nursing personnel.

After careful study of the position description, the Board's opinion is that the tasks which are included are designed to provide assistance to the ophthalmologist rather than assistance to a registered nurse. Consequently, the Board suggests that the Physician's Assistant Law and Rules and Regulations of the Board of Medical Examiners may be applicable to this position, in which case the position would not be a nursing position, and therefore, not subject to nursing supervision. The employee in that position would be under the control and supervision of the physician.

If I can further assist you in this matter, or in other nursing practice matters, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sister Lucie Leonard, R. N.
Nursing Practice Consultant
SLL/Imp

cc: James P. Ganley, M.D.
Robert C. Hall, Hospital Administration

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