

Louisiana State Board of Nursing

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President

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Miss Merlyn M. Maillian, R.N.
Executive Director

July 30, 1985

Anita Fields, Ph.D, RN
Dean, College of Nursing
McNeese State University
Lake Charles, LA 70601

Dear Dr. Fields:

On July 25, 1985, the Board of Nursing deliberated on your request for an interpretation of L.R.S. 37:913 (3) c in regard to the delegation by school nurses of certain specific nursing procedures to the classroom teacher for the severely and profoundly handicapped child. The Board's interpretation is as follows:

1. Seizure management, body positioning, range of motion and motor programming, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, management of adaptive devices, and care of bowel and bladder elimination and skin maintenance related to elimination problems may legally be delegated by a registered nurse to a classroom teacher provided the rules for delegation are met. (See R.N. 3.02 (1) (2), enclosed.)
2. Invasive nursing procedures may be delegated to classroom teachers if the procedures can be defined as non-complex tasks. A non-complex task can safely be performed according to exact directions, with no need to alter the standard procedure and results are predictable. A complex task requires judgment to safely alter the 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. Complex nursing tasks should be performed by licensed practitioners of nursing.

Suctioning a tracheostomy is complex in some situations and can be non-complex in other situations, depending upon the patient's/client's condition. A clean, "healed", uncomplicated tracheostomy in an individual who has no cardiopulmonary problems and is able to cooperate with the person performing the suctioning could possibly be considered non-complex. The procedure should be well defined so that it can be taught (and learned) exactly as it will be performed and the patient's/client's condition should not require the caregiver to have to alter the procedure.

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The above would also apply to removing and cleaning the inner tracheostomy cannula. Replacement of the outer cannula is a complex task. Of course, in emergency situations (life-threatening) the rules of the Board do not apply. (L.R.S 37: 929, C, provides that the Nurse Practice Act shall not apply to nursing assistance in the care of immediate emergency.)

The degree of mental capability and/or the presence of multi-handicapping should certainly be considered in judging the complexity of the task.

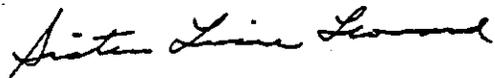
3. The administration of medications is a complex task and may not be delegated to unlicensed persons.

Although the Board did not specifically address the guidelines which you propose, those guidelines which relate to activities other than medication administration are not in conflict with the Board's opinion. Documentation and regular consultation with the school nurse seem to be two necessary factors in safeguarding the students' welfare.

The Board of Nursing has serious concerns about the classroom teacher performing nursing activities. Additionally, the Board members question who will teach the other students while the teacher is meeting the nursing needs of a few students.

If I can further assist you with this matter, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Sister Lucie Leonard, R.N.
Nursing Practice Consultant

SLL:hj