

May 27, 1996

Anetha J. Craft, MS, RN
Nursing Education Coordinator
Lake Charles Memorial Hospital
980 Chickasaw Drive
Lake Charles, LA 70611

Dear Ms. Craft:

Your request for an opinion of the Board of Nursing regarding if it is within the scope of practice of a registered nurse, qualified in Emergency Care to triage a non-emergent patient under the direction of specific protocols and guidelines established by the Emergency Department medical staff, and refer the patient to designated clinic settings or other health care services was presented to the Nursing Practice Committee at its April 8, 1996 meeting.

The Nursing Practice Committee studied the issue and formulated a recommendation to the Board of Nursing. On May 16, 1996 the Committee presented its recommendation to the Board, and after due deliberation, the Board adopted the following opinion:

In response to Agenda Item 4.10:

It is within the scope of practice for a registered nurse qualified in emergency care with documented knowledge, skills, and abilities to assess the health status of an individual to determine a non-emergent status and to formulate nursing diagnoses based on health care needs to serve as the basis for indicating nursing care or for which referral to appropriate medical or community resource for the non-emergent health status. Triage guidelines must be in place to assist the registered nurse with appropriate referrals approved by the agency's emergency's medical director.

A non-emergent medical condition means a medical condition exhibiting no acute symptoms of sufficient severity (excluding severe pain). Referral and triage of such non-emergent condition shall not be reasonably expected to result in:

1. Placing a patient's health in serious jeopardy;
2. Serious impairment to bodily functions; and
3. Serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part.

The Nursing Practice Committee members expressed their appreciation for having the opportunity to speak with you on April 8, 1996; the information you provided assisted them in deliberating this request.

If you have any questions about this matter, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Barbara L. Morvant, MN, RN
Executive Director

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