

Louisiana State Board of Nursing

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President

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907 Pere Marquette Building
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July 27, 1982

Ms. Mary Ruth Bucy, R.N., Consultant
A.M.I., Incorporated
P.O. Box 33888
Shreveport, LA 71130

Dear Ms. Bucy:

This is in response to your request for information on the legality of registered nurses inserting gastrostomy tubes. Your request arrived too late to be scheduled for an official opinion of the Board at the July 22-23 meeting of the Board. I will give you my personal opinion, and if this does not meet your need, I can request time on the agenda for the September 1-2, 1982 meeting of the Board for an official opinion of the Board.

There is nothing in the Nurse Practice Act to prohibit the reinsertion of gastrostomy tubes by a registered nurse in uncomplicated situations. The original procedure is a surgical procedure which is not within the legal realm of nursing practice. However, when the opening (stoma) and the channel through the layers of tissue are well established and healing has sealed off the peritoneal cavity, the tube can safely be reinserted by a registered nurse, provided that the tube does not require suturing. The Board of Nursing has determined that suturing is not within the legal realm of nursing.

When a retention gastrostomy tube (sutured in or otherwise retained in place) slips out, there is often a complication which caused it to slip, such as, tissue breakdown due to infection or irritation. In these cases, there is a possibility that the channel is no longer well established with a resultant danger of invading the peritoneal cavity when the tube is reinserted. I believe it is inappropriate (and unsafe) for a nurse to reinsert a gastrostomy tube in such complicated cases.

If I can further assist you in this, or other nursing practice matters, please feel free to contact me. Should you need an official opinion of the Board, please let us know by August 10, 1982.

Sincerely,

Sister Lucie Leonard
Sister Lucie Leonard, R.N.
Nursing Practice Consultant

9-1-82
LSBN concurred with above
opinions see

prop 82-13