

Louisiana State Board of Nursing

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RE: Selected Interpretation of Legal Definition of Nursing
Practice by the Board of Nursing

From: Sister Lucie Leonard, R.N.
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On May 9, 1986, the Board of Nursing deliberated on a request for an interpretation of the legal definition of nursing practice, particularly whether or not a triage role in an emergency room with responsibility for deciding if a patient is non-urgent or urgent and referring to a charity hospital all non-urgent patients who have no financial means to pay for their hospital bills, is within the legal realm of the practice of a registered nurse. The Board's opinion in this matter is as follows:

It is not in accord with the Nurse Practice Act for the registered nurse to triage patients with intent to refer patients to other health care facilities.

A preliminary medical diagnosis will have to be made prior to referring a patient to another facility. The Louisiana Nurse Practice Act, specifically L.R.S. 37:913 (3), prohibits registered nurses from engaging in acts of medical diagnosis.

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