

May 24, 1988

Peggy Mathews, RN
Director, Cardiac Cath Lab
St. Frances Cabrini Hospital
3330 Masonic Drive
Alexandria, LA 71301

Dear Ms. Mathews:

Your request for an opinion of the Board of Nursing regarding the legal realm of nursing was scheduled for the Board's deliberation at its meeting on May 19, 1988. The specific questions posed to the Board was:

Is it within the realm of the Registered Nurse's practice to set up and operate a cardiopulmonary support system designed to take over the respiratory and cardiac function of a patient that is deteriorating?

After due deliberation, including a discussion of this matter with you and Dr. Robert Freeman, the Board adopted the following opinion:

.12

In reference to agenda item 3 b, it is within the realm of practice for a registered nurse to set up a cardiopulmonary support system designed to take over the respiratory and cardiac function of a patient that is deteriorating, providing said nurse has the necessary knowledge and skills and that these are documented in the nurse's file.

During the discussion which preceded the adoption of the opinion, it was ascertained that operating the support system requires special skills which are different from those required for setting up the equipment and that this function should be reserved to a perfusionist. For that reason, the opinion does not include operation of the system.

The members of the Board appreciated the input which you and Dr. Freeman provided.

If I can further assist you with nursing practice matters, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sister Lucie Leonard, MSN, RN
Nursing Practice Consultant