

November 7, 1994

Pam Thomas, RN, BSN  
Educator, Home Health  
Claire Rebouche, RNC, MSN  
Manager of Staff Development  
Willis-Knighton Medical Center  
2600 Greenwood Road  
Shreveport, LA 71103

Dear Mesdames Thomas and Rebouche:

Your request for an opinion of the Board of Nursing regarding a registered nurse administering analgesic doses of anesthetic agents via the epidural route in the home health setting was presented to the Board at its meeting on November 5, 1994.

The Nursing Practice Committee studied the issue at its October 3 meeting and formulated a recommendation to the Board of Nursing. On November 5, 1994 the Committee presented its recommendation to the Board, and after due deliberation, the Board adopted the following opinion:

In reference to agenda item #4.8, the epidural administration of analgesic doses of anesthetic agents in the home is within the realm of practice of the registered nurse who is not a CRNA provided the agency adheres to duly established guidelines/policies which meet the following criteria:

- 1.The purpose and goal of the treatment are clearly stated.
- 2.There are written protocols, with documentation of acceptance of the protocols by the medical staff of the agency.
- 3.The maximum dose per hour of an anesthetic agent which can be administered by a registered nurse who is not a CRNA is approved by the medical staff.
- 4.There is a specific written medical order, signed by a physician, for each patient receiving the treatment.
- 5.Orders to change the rate of infusion are written each time the rate is changed. In an emergency situation, the registered nurse may decrease the rate of infusion before calling the physician.

OR

There are clearly stated criteria, signed by the physician, for adjusting the rate of infusion.

6. There is documentation that the registered nurse has successfully completed a course of instruction which includes, but is not limited to:

a. Didactic instruction and related supervised clinical practice by a physician or CRNA.

b. Content of course:

(1) Anatomy and physiology of the spinal cord and column.

(2) Purpose of the epidural catheter for pain management.

(3) Catheter placement and signs and symptoms of misplacement.

(4) Effects of medication administered epidurally.

(5) Untoward reaction to medication and management.

(6) Complications.

(7) Nursing care responsibilities:

(a) Observation

(b) Procedures

(c) Catheter maintenance

(d) Removal of catheter

7. There are clearly stated prerequisite conditions for:

a. Preparation of solution

b. Initiation of infusion

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c. Emergency conditions

8. There are criteria for documentation of the procedure.

**Prior to implementation of the program, a registered nurse representative of the agency shall submit the agency's guidelines/policies for review by the Board of Nursing.**

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

Sincerely,

Barbara L. Morvant, MN, RN

Executive Director

BLM:sll

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