

February 20, 1995

Barbara L. Morvant, MN, RN
Executive Director
Louisiana State Board of Nursing
150 Baronne Street, Suite 912
New Orleans, LA 70112

Dear Mrs. Morvant:

Your request for an opinion of the Board of Nursing regarding a registered nurse performing fiberoptic flexible sigmoidoscopy for colorectal cancer screening was presented to the Board at its meeting on February 15, 1995. It is recorded that your request was pursuant to the publication in the New England Journal of Medicine, Vol. 330, No. 3, pages 183-186, reporting the performance of fiberoptic flexible sigmoidoscopies by two registered nurses in Louisiana.

The Nursing Practice Committee had studied the issue since its April, 1994 meeting. The study included oral testimony from the participants in the research which prompted the question regarding a registered nurse's legal scope of practice. At its January 9, 1995 meeting, the Committee completed its deliberation and formulated a recommendation to the Board of Nursing. On February 15, 1995, the Committee presented its recommendation to the Board, and after due deliberation, the Board adopted the following opinion:

In reference to agenda item 4.1, it is within the realm of advanced nursing practice to perform flexible sigmoidoscopy for colorectal carcinoma screening provided the advanced practitioner has documented evidence of knowledge, skills, and abilities, the program of study is approved by Louisiana State Board of Nursing, and further, that the procedure is performed on healthy and/or low risk individuals under the order and direction of a licensed physician, the physician is present in the area, the procedure is videotaped, and such tapes are maintained for physician's review.

Such program of studies shall included, but not limited to:

1. Didactic instructions to include:
 - a. Anatomy and physiology
 - b. Purpose of the procedures
 - c. Technique
 - d. Complications
 - e. Nursing responsibilities
 - f. Criteria for documentation of performance and screening results

2. Supervised clinical practice to include:
 - a. Observation trials
 - b. Withdrawal trials
 - c. Supervised complete examinations

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As an exception to the advanced practice requirements, the two registered nurses, Elizabeth M. Ducote and Melanie Nutter, currently performing flexible

sigmoidoscopies for colorectal cancer screening under the auspices of Ochsner Clinic may continue to perform this procedure provided said nurses perform the procedure under the same conditions at Ochsner Clinic.

Sincerely,

Maxine E. Johnson, MSN, RN
President

cc: Elizabeth M. Ducote, RN
Melanie Nutter, RN
William F. Maule, MD
David Clark, Administrator
William A. Morvant, Attorney

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