

May 27, 1996

Donna Carter, RN
Chief Nursing Officer
Minden Medical Center
#1 Medical Plaza
Minden, LA 71055

Dear Ms. Carter:

Your request for an opinion of the Board of Nursing regarding if it is within the scope of practice of a registered nurse, working in a AB Department to perform a vaginal examination (screening exam) to determine active labor, call the physician, and based on the physician's telephone order, discharge the patient; and, further if the registered nurse is deemed to be a "qualified medical person" as so defined by the "COBRA" Law which requires a medical screening examination to be done by a "qualified medical person" was presented to the Nursing Practice Committee at its April 8, 1996 meeting.

The Nursing Practice Committee studied the issue and formulated a recommendation to the Board of Nursing. On May 16, 1996 the Committee presented its recommendation to the Board, and after due deliberation, the Board adopted the following opinion:

In response to Agenda Item 4.5:

It is within the scope of practice for a qualified obstetrical registered nurse to perform a nursing assessment, including a vaginal examination, and discharge the patient home provided that:

1. The registered nurse telephones the attending physician and reports the assessment and physical examination findings;
2. Obtains a telephone order from the attending physician to discharge the patient home, whether or not the physician has seen the patient; and
3. The said nurse demonstrates current competency in obstetrical nursing and that the nurse's knowledge, skills, and abilities is documented in the record.

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

Sincerely,

Barbara L. Morvant, MN, RN
Executive Director

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