While complaints can be filed anonymously, KBN is required to have a written complaint and we ask that you provide your name, address, and telephone number.

To help KBN investigate your complaint the following information will be needed:

- Nurse's name (first and last)
- Nurse's address, if known
- What did he/she do?
- Where did it happen?
- Date and time it happened
- With whom did it happen?
- Did anyone witness it? If so, include their name(s)
- Your name, address and phone number

What Happens After the Complaint Is Made?

The Board is authorized to investigate and take action against persons who are licensed or credentialed as nurses in the Commonwealth or have applied for licensure or a credential. KBN may also investigate a complaint on a nurse who is practicing in Kentucky on another state's compact license.

As soon as a complaint is received at the Board, an investigation begins. First, a determination is made as to whether or not the facts, as alleged, violate existing laws or regulations that govern the nurse's practice.

If a violation of a regulation or law did indeed occur, and the violator is licensed or credentialed as a nurse, then an immediate, detailed investigation into the facts of the case is begun. Evidence is gathered and interviews are conducted. If the evidence obtained during the investigation supports the allegation(s), and the facts are not disputed by the nurse, the Board may negotiate a settlement with the nurse, outlining the facts of the violation and appropriate sanction(s). If the nurse disputes the facts, he/she is entitled to a formal hearing. During the hearing, both sides may present evidence and witnesses. The Board determines the outcome and issues any appropriate sanction(s).

Sanctions vary by state boards of nursing. In Kentucky, monetary damages are not awarded to consumers as a result of Board action. Below is a sample of the sanctions from which boards of nursing may choose:

- Reprimand the licensee
- Impose a fine up to $10,000
- Place on probation
- Limit the license or credential
- Suspend the license or credential
- Revoke the license or credential
- Dismiss the complaint

Remember, **reporting** an incompetent or unsafe nurse **is mandatory** — Never hesitate to contact the Board office to discuss your concerns. You are entitled to safe nursing care. By participating in this process, you will have helped your board of nursing assure public protection.

Kentucky Alternative Recovery Effort (KARE) for Nurses Program

The Kentucky Alternative Recovery Effort (KARE) for Nurses is offered by the Kentucky Board of Nursing to assist nurses in the early identification and treatment of chemical dependency. The program recognizes that nurses are individuals who have dedicated their lives to helping others and are now in need of help to complete a course of treatment. The KARE for Nurses Program is available to those nurses who have not harmed patients.

Should you wish to obtain more information, please contact the KARE for Nurses Program at (502) 429-3328, or 800-305-2042, Ext. 236 or visit the KBN website at http://kbn.ky.gov.

For additional information, visit the KBN website at http://kbn.ky.gov

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Assuring Safe Nursing Care in Kentucky

The Kentucky Board of Nursing is the Government agency that

develops and enforces state laws governing the safe practice of nursing in order to protect the health and welfare of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Kentucky Board of Nursing
312 Whittington Pkwy., Ste. 300
Louisville, KY 40222-5172
1-800-305-2042 or 502-429-3300

The Kentucky Board of Nursing (KBN):

- Is a state government agency established in 1914.
- Licenses and regulates over 66,000 nurses.
- Sets the legal requirements for nursing education and practice.
- Members are appointed by the Governor to serve 4-year terms.
- Has 16 appointed members: registered nurses (RN), licensed practical nurses (LPN), advanced registered nurse practitioners (ARNP), and citizen-at-large members.
- Issues a license to practice nursing to a qualified individual after successful completion of a state approved nursing education program and a national nursing licensure examination.
- Monitors compliance with Kentucky nursing laws and takes action against the licenses of nurses proven incompetent or unsafe to practice nursing.
- Is not the professional membership organization for nurses.

Nurses Licensed & Regulated by KBN

A **licensed practical nurse** (LPN), also known in some states as a licensed vocational nurse (LVN), provides care under the direction of a registered nurse, licensed physician, or dentist. The National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses is the professional organization for LPNs.

A **registered nurse** (RN) provides nursing care, as well as medical care prescribed by a physician, ARNP, or physician assistant. The Kentucky Nurses Association is the professional organization for RNs.

An **advanced registered nurse practitioner** (ARNP) is a registered nurse who has completed additional education and is registered by KBN as an ARNP. The ARNP provides primary or specialized care services as a nurse practitioner, nurse anesthetist, nurse-midwife, or clinical nurse specialist. An ARNP may issue prescriptions for non-scheduled legend drugs (non-narcotic) if the ARNP has a written collaborative agreement with a physician to do so. The ARNP who is prescribing controlled substances must also have a collaborative agreement and the collaborating physician shall be qualified in the same or similar specialty. The ARNP must also obtain a DEA registration to prescribe controlled substances and be aware of limitations on prescriptions of Schedule II—V, according to KRS 314.011(8) and 201 KAR 20:059.

A **sexual assault nurse examiner** (SANE) is a registered nurse who has completed additional educational preparation to perform examinations and provide care to victims of sexual assault and is credentialed by KBN as a SANE. SANE credentialed nurses also collect evidence, maintain the chain of custody, and provide testimony in a court setting.

Verifying that a Nurse is Licensed

Kentucky law (KRS 216B.150 and 216B.170) **mandates** that nurses working in hospitals and health care facilities in the Commonwealth wear identification badges that list their name, licensure credential, and position title or department.

A nurse providing care must show you validation of current licensure when asked.

Using an individual's name or license number, you may validate the licensure status of a nurse from the KBN website at http://kbn.ky.gov. Nurses may hold a current, multistate license from a state that is a member of the Nurse Licensure Compact and practice nursing in Kentucky. You may validate current, multistate licensure from www.nursys.com

Every Citizen Deserves a Competent Nurse

Nurses are committed to providing quality patient care. They recognize that the nursing law holds each nurse individually responsible and accountable for his/her nursing actions. Kentucky nurses are expected to practice with skill and safety, and are accountable for being educationally prepared and clinically competent. Kentucky nurses are legally required to validate continuing competence prior to license renewal every year.

Every citizen is entitled to competent, safe, nursing care. If problems are encountered with care, the information in this brochure will help to report suspected violations of the Nursing Laws to KBN.

Recognizing Violations of the Kentucky Nursing Laws

Kentucky law, specifically KRS 314.031 (4), mandates any nurse, employer of nurses, or any person having knowledge of a nurse acting in a manner inconsistent with the practice of nursing, to report such actions to the Board. While not an exhaustive list, some examples of violations of the nurse laws are:

- Engaging in acts of incompetence, negligence, or unsafe practice.
- Failing to maintain confidentiality of patient information.
- Having a criminal conviction that has direct impact on the ability to practice nursing.
- Practicing as a nurse without a current license or registration.
- Practicing under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- Falsifying or failing to make necessary and correct entries on medical records.
- Being verbally, sexually, or physically abusive.
- Abandoning or neglecting a patient in need of immediate care.

Filing a Complaint

If you believe that a nurse has acted in an incompetent or unsafe manner, or if you are questioning the behavior of a nurse for any reason, you should first contact the nurse's employer to report the problem and then call the KBN office to discuss the matter.

Remember that you are a partner in insuring that safe nursing care is provided. Do not hesitate to share your concerns with the nurse's employer and with KBN. When you contact the Board office, the Board will send you a complaint form upon request or you may obtain one from the Board of Nursing website http://kbn.ky.gov.