KENTUCKY BOARD OF NURSING
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ADVISORY OPINION STATEMENT

THE PERFORMANCE OF WOUND DEBRIDEMENT BY NURSES

Introduction

The Kentucky Board of Nursing is authorized by Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) Chapter 314 to regulate nurses, nursing education and practice, and to issue advisory opinions on nursing practice, in order to assure that safe and effective nursing care is provided by nurses to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

The Kentucky Board of Nursing issues advisory opinions as to what constitutes safe nursing practice. As such, an opinion is not a regulation of the Board and does not have the force and effect of law. It is issued as a guidepost to licensees who wish to engage in safe nursing practice.

Accountability and Responsibility of Nurses

KRS 314.021(2) holds nurses individually responsible and accountable for rendering safe, effective nursing care to clients and for judgments exercised and actions taken in the course of providing care.

KRS 314.021(2) imposes individual responsibility upon nurses. Acts which are within the permissible scope of practice for a given licensure level may be performed only by those licensees who personally possess the education and skill proficiency to perform those acts in a safe, effective manner.

Nursing practice should be consistent with the *Kentucky Nursing Laws*, established standards of practice, and be evidence based.

Wound Debridement by Nurses

The Board has received multiple inquiries on the role, utilization and scope of practice for both the registered nurse and licensed practical nurse in the provision of wound debridement for clients with impaired skin/tissue integrity.

Advisory Opinion

After review of the statutes governing registered nursing practice, licensed practical nursing practice, advanced registered nursing practice, and the knowledge and skill required to perform surgical and/or mechanical wound debridement (removal of nonviable tissue), the Kentucky Board of Nursing issued the following advisory opinions:

The performance of surgical and/or mechanical wound debridement as ordered by a qualified provider, for an individual patient, are within the scope of registered nursing practice for the registered nurse qualified by education, experience and current clinical competence. Such debridement is also within the scope of advanced registered nursing practice when the ARNP is educationally prepared and clinically competent in the performance of the procedures.

The registered nurse should perform debridement according to established written agency policy and procedure, which are consistent with the definition of registered nursing practice [KRS 314.011(6)]. The registered nurse is responsible for having adequate educational preparation and clinical experience to perform debridement procedures in a safe effective manner. The registered nurse should have documented evidence of completion of continuing education, which provides for clinical practice and demonstration of competency in the performance of debridement procedures

It is within the scope of licensed practical nursing practice for a licensed practical nurse qualified by education, experience, and current clinical competency to assist the advanced registered nurse practitioner, registered nurse or licensed physician in debridement.

Determining Scope of Practice

KRS 314.021(2) holds all nurses individually responsible and accountable for the individual's acts based upon the nurse's education and experience. Each nurse must exercise professional and prudent judgment in determining whether the performance of a given act is within the scope of practice for which the nurse is both licensed and clinically competent to perform. In addition to this advisory opinion statement, the Kentucky Board of Nursing has published "Scope of Practice Determination Guidelines" which contains a decision tree chart providing guidance to nurses in determining whether a selected act is within an individual nurse's scope of practice now or in the future. A copy of the guidelines may be purchased from the Board office or downloaded from the KBN website at http://kbn.ky.gov

Other Applicable Statutes from the Kentucky Nursing Laws[1]

KRS 314.011(8) defines "advanced registered nursing practice" as:

> ... The performance of additional acts by registered nurses who have gained added knowledge and skills through an organized postbasic program of study and clinical experience and who are certified by the American Nurses' Association or other nationally established organizations or agencies recognized by the board to certify registered nurses for advanced nursing practice. The additional acts shall, subject to approval of the board, include but not be limited to prescribing treatment, drugs, devices, and ordering diagnostic tests. Advanced registered nurse practitioners who engage in these additional acts shall be authorized to issue prescriptions for and dispense nonscheduled legend drugs as defined in KRS 217.905 and to issue prescriptions for but not to dispense Schedules II through V controlled substances as classified in KRS 218A.060, 218A.070, 218A.080, 218A.090, 218A.100, 218A.110, 218A.120, and 218A,130, under the conditions set forth in KRS 314.042 and regulations promulgated by the Kentucky Board of Nursing on or before August 15, 2006. (a).... ...The performance of these additional acts shall be consistent with the certifying organization or agencies' scopes and standards of practice recognized by the board by administrative regulation.

[1] A copy of the *Kentucky Nursing Laws* may be purchased from the Kentucky Board of Nursing office.

KRS 314.011(6) defines "registered nursing practice" as:

... The performance of acts requiring substantial specialized knowledge, judgment and nursing skill based upon the principles of psychological, biological, physical and social sciences in the application of the nursing process in:

(a) The care, counsel, and health teaching of the ill, injured or infirm;

(b) The maintenance of health or prevention of illness of others;

(c) The administration of medication and treatment as prescribed by a physician, physician assistant, dentist or advanced registered nurse practitioner and as further authorized or limited by the board, and which are consistent either with American Nurses' Association Standards of Practice or with Standards of Practice established by nationally accepted organizations of registered nurses. Components of medication administration include, but are not limited to:

1. Preparing and giving medication in the prescribed dosage, route, and frequency, including dispensing medications only as defined in subsection (17)(b) of this section;
2. Observing, recording, and reporting desired effects, untoward reactions, and side effects of drug therapy;
3. Intervening when emergency care is required as a result of drug therapy;
4. Recognizing accepted prescribing limits and reporting deviations to the prescribing individuals;
5. Recognizing drug incompatibilities and reporting interactions or potential interactions to the prescribing individual; and
6. Instructing an individual regarding medications.

(d) The supervision, teaching of, and delegation to other personnel in the performance of activities relating to nursing care.

(e) The performance of other nursing acts which are authorized or limited by the board, and which are consistent either with American Nurse's Association Standards of Practice or with Standards of Practice established by nationally accepted organizations of registered nurses.

KRS 314.011(10) defines "licensed practical nursing practice" as:

... The performance of acts requiring the knowledge and skill such as are taught or acquired in approved schools for practical nursing in:

(a) The observing and caring for the ill, injured, or infirm under the direction of a registered nurse, a licensed physician, or dentist;

(b) The giving of counsel and applying procedures to safeguard life and health, as defined and authorized by the board;

(c) The administration of medication or treatment as authorized by a physician, physician assistant, dentist, or advanced registered nurse practitioner and as further authorized or limited by the board which is consistent with the National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses or with Standards of Practice established by nationally accepted organizations of licensed practical nurses;

(d) Teaching, supervising, and delegating except as limited by the board; and

(e) The performance of other nursing acts, which are authorized, or limited by the board and which are consistent with the National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses' Standards of Practice or with Standards of Practice established by nationally accepted organizations of licensed practical nurses.

Approved: 2/1985
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