

NAME CHANGES

One of the most frequent questions the Board gets concerns the name a nurse should use, particularly for women who get married. Kentucky recognizes the common law right of any person to change their name, so long as it is not done for fraudulent purposes. There is a procedure set out in the state statutes (KRS Chapter 401) which gives the district courts jurisdiction over name change requests.

There is a general custom in our society that when a woman marries, she adopts the last name of her husband. If this happens to a nurse and she wishes to change her name, she is required by KBN administrative regulation (201 KAR 20:370) to submit the proper documentation (i.e. a copy of the marriage license) and to request a change in her name as it appears in the KBN database for licensure. The fee for this is \$25.

However, neither KBN nor social custom nor the law requires a woman to adopt her husband's last name after marriage. She may continue to use her birth-given name, in which case, she would not have to do anything with the Board. She may also continue to use her birth-given name for professional purposes, i.e. her name as a nurse, and her married name (that is, her husband's last name) for all other purposes.

A nurse should always sign as a nurse on charts, etc. in the name that appears on the KBN database, as this is the nurse's official name for licensure. If a change is requested, the new name can be used when the database is changed. A nurse who is newly married should not use her married name as a nurse until she officially changes it with the Board. Until that is accomplished, she should continue to use her birth-given name, which is the name in which she is currently licensed.

Nathan Goldman
General Counsel
9/15/14