



**KENTUCKY BOARD OF NURSING**  
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**ADVISORY OPINION STATEMENT**

**THE PERFORMANCE OF ARTERIAL PUNCTURE BY REGISTERED NURSES**

The Kentucky Board of Nursing is authorized by Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) Chapter 314 to regulate nurses, nursing education and practice, promulgate regulations 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 guideline to licensees who wish to engage in safe nursing practice, and to facilitate the delivery of safe, effective nursing care to the public.

**Opinion:** THE PERFORMANCE OF ARTERIAL PUNCTURE BY REGISTERED NURSES  
**Approved Date:** 6/1984  
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**Accountability and Responsibility of Nurses**

In accordance with KRS 314.021(2), nurses are responsible and accountable for making decisions that are based upon the individuals' educational preparation and current clinical competence in nursing, and requires licensees to practice nursing with reasonable skill and safety. Nursing practice should be consistent with the *Kentucky Nursing Laws*, established standards of practice, and be evidence based.

**Rationale for Advisory Opinion**

Numerous inquiries regarding the role of the registered nurse in the performance of arterial puncture to obtain a specimen have been received by the Kentucky Board of Nursing. After study of the issues and concerns regarding the performance of arterial puncture, the Kentucky Board of Nursing issued the following opinions:

**Advisory Opinion:**

**Licensed Practical Nursing Practice**

The performance of arterial puncture is not within the scope of licensed practical nursing practice.

**Registered Nursing Practice**

The performance of an arterial puncture, as ordered by an advanced practice registered nurse, physician assistant, or physician to obtain a specimen is within the scope of registered nursing practice.

Registered nurses who perform arterial puncture should be educationally prepared and clinically competent to perform said acts as required by KRS 314.021(2), and have documented evidence of educational preparation and clinical competence in the performance of such procedure. The registered nurse is responsible for documentation of educational preparation and for maintaining continuing competency.

In the performance of arterial puncture, the registered nurse should<sup>1</sup>:

1. Perform the procedure in accordance with the established written agency policies and procedures that are consistent with the definition of "registered nursing practice" as stated in KRS 314.011(6).
2. Be knowledgeable of the potential complications and adverse reactions that may result from the procedure, and take appropriate nursing intervention as needed.

**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 issued Advisory Opinion Statement #41 RN/LPN Scope of Practice Determination Guidelines which contains the KBN Decision-Making Model for Determining Scope of Practice for RNs/LPNs, and published the APRN Scope of Practice Decision Making Model providing guidance to nurses in determining whether a selected act is within an individual nurse's scope of practice now or in the future. Copies of Advisory Opinion Statement #41 RN/LPN Scope of Practice Determination Guidelines, the KBN Decision-Making Model for Determining Scope of Practice for RNs/LPNs and the APRN Scope of Practice Determination Decision Making Model may be downloaded from the Board's website [www.kbn.ky.gov](http://www.kbn.ky.gov).

**Applicable Statutes From the *Kentucky Nursing Laws*<sup>2</sup>**

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:

<sup>1</sup> Arterial Blood Sampling. In WHO Guidelines on Drawing Blood: Best Practices in Phlebotomy. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK138661/>

<sup>2</sup> A copy of the *Kentucky Nursing Laws* may be downloaded from the Kentucky Board of Nursing website at <http://kbn.ky.gov>.

- 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 practice registered nurse and as further authorized or limited by the board, and which are consistent either with American Nurses' Association Scope and 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 medications 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 individual;
  - 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; and
- e) The performance of other nursing acts which are 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.

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

...The performance of acts requiring 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, advanced practice registered nurse, physician assistant, 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 practice registered nurse 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 Practical Nurses' Standards of Practice or with Standards of Practice established by nationally accepted organizations of licensed practical nurses.