

**AOS #45 Complementary Procedures**  
(Approved 12/2023)



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

**Roles of Nurses in the Performance of Complementary Procedures**

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:** Roles of Nurses in the Performance of Complementary Procedures

**Approved Date:** 12/2023

**Revised:**  
**Editorial Revision:**

**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 Statement**

The Board receives inquiries related to the role of nurses in the performance of various complementary procedures and the role and scope of nurses.

Complementary medicine refers to types of treatments that may be received alone or along with traditional Western medicine. It is a group of therapeutic and diagnostic disciplines that exist largely outside the institutions where conventional health care is taught and provided. This advisory opinion statement will include complementary treatment modalities that may be utilized in addressing various symptoms or health issues.

**Nursing Interventions identified in this Advisory Opinion Statement include:**

- **The Role of Nurses in the performance of complementary procedures:**
  - Acupuncture, including, dry needling.

**Educational Preparation and Clinical Competency**

Pursuant to KRS 314.021(2) all nurses are held responsible and accountable for making decisions that are based upon the individual's educational preparation and current clinical competence. One method for demonstrating educational preparation and clinical competence is through obtaining relevant certifications within a specialty area. Another method would be to create a portfolio of trainings, workshops, and continuing education that demonstrates the acquisition of additional knowledge and clinical competency in the specialty area.

**Acupuncture**

Pursuant to KRS 311.672 (5) the "practice of acupuncture means the insertion of acupuncture needles, with or without accompanying electrical or thermal stimulation, at certain acupuncture points or meridians on the surface of the human body for purposes of changing the flow of energy in the body and may include acupressure, cupping, moxibustion, or dermal friction. The practice of acupuncture shall not include laser acupuncture, osteopathic manipulation treatment, chiropractic adjustments, physical therapy, or surgery."

For the purposes of this advisory opinion statement, acupuncture includes the performance of dry needling.\*

**Acupuncturist**

The Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure licenses acupuncturists KRS 311.672 (1). Additional information related to the KBML is available at <https://kbml.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx>.

**Advanced Practice Registered Nurses**

APRNs may be authorized to perform additional acts due to training and experience, such as prescribing treatment, devices, and order diagnostic tests pursuant to KRS 314. 011(8).

On October 19, 2023, the Board reaffirmed and consolidated opinions to include dry needling as an acupuncture procedure.

It is the opinion of the Board that:

The performance of acupuncture is within the scope of practice for the APRN who is currently educationally prepared and clinically competent in the performance of the procedure. Further, the APRN should maintain documentation of having completed a nationally recognized course of study in acupuncture. The performance of acupuncture should be in accordance with documented facility policy and procedures and credentialing processes, as well as current evidence-based practice.

### **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. A copy of the KBN Decision-Making Model for Determining Scope of Practice for RNs/LPNs may be downloaded from the Board's website <https://kbn.ky.gov/practice/Documents/41%20KBN%20Decision-Making%20Model%20for%20Determining%20Scope%20of%20Practice%20for%20RNs-LPNs.pdf> and a copy of the APRN guidelines may be downloaded from the Board's website <http://kbn.ky.gov/practice/Documents/APRN%20Scope%20of%20Practice%20%20Decision%20Making%20Model.pdf>.

### **Applicable Statutes from the *Kentucky Nursing Laws***

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

“Advanced practice registered nursing” means the performance of additional acts by registered nurses who have gained advanced clinical knowledge and skills through an accredited education program that prepares the registered nurse for one (1) of the four (4) APRN roles; 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 practice registered nursing as a certified nurse practitioner, certified registered nurse anesthetist, certified nurse midwife, or clinical nurse specialist; and who certified in at least one (1) population focus. 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 practice registered nurses 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.020, 218A.060, 218A.080, 218A.100, and 218A.120, under the conditions set forth in KRS 314.042 and regulations promulgated by the Kentucky Board of Nursing on or before August 15, 2006. ... 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.