Differentiating RN from LVN Scope of Practice Under Rule 217.11 Standards of Nursing Practice

SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR NURSES

Nursing services must be provided with specialized judgment and skill, based on knowledge and application of the principles of biological, physical and social science as acquired by a completed course of study in an approved school of vocational or professional nursing.

LVNs and RNs must provide safe, compassionate nursing care as a member of the profession, provider of patient-centered care, patient safety advocate and member of the health care team.

Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) and Registered Nurses (RNs), with a focus on patient safety, are required to function within the parameters of the legal scope of practice and in accordance with the federal, state and local laws; rules and regulations; and policies, procedures and guidelines of the employing health care institution or practice setting.

LICENSED VOCATIONAL NURSE (LVN)

- Has a directed scope of practice to provide focused nursing care that requires specialized judgment and skill.
- Requires appropriate supervision by an RN, APRN, physician, physician assistant, podiatrist or dentist for LVN practice.
- Does not perform medical diagnosis or prescription of therapeutic or corrective measures.
- Provides care to assigned patients with predictable health care needs.
- Utilizes a systematic approach to provide individualized, goal-directed nursing care by:
  - Collecting data and performing focused assessments.
  - Helping to plan nursing care for patients and to develop/modify the nursing plan of care.
  - Implementing appropriate aspects of nursing care.
  - Helping evaluate the patient's responses to nursing care.
- May help implement established teaching plans for patients with common health problems and their families with well-defined health learning needs.
- Cannot practice completely independently; however, direct and on-site supervision may not be required in all settings or patient care situations.
  - An appropriate clinical supervisor may need to be physically available to assist the LVN in emergencies.
  - The setting in which the LVN provides nursing care should have well-defined policies, procedures, and guidelines in which assistance and support are available from an appropriate clinical supervisor.
  - The LVN must ensure he or she has access to an appropriate clinical supervisor and that the policies, procedures and guidelines for that setting are established.
- Cannot delegate tasks to UAPs; however, LVNs may assign tasks to other LVNs and UAPs according to 22 TAC § 217.11(2).

REGISTERED NURSE (RN)

- Has an independent scope of practice to provide nursing services that requires substantial specialized judgment and skill.
- Does not require supervision by another health care provider for RN practice.
- Does not perform medical diagnosis or prescription of therapeutic or corrective measures, unless licensed as an advanced practice registered nurse.
- Provides care to patients and their families with complex health care needs.
- Utilizes a systematic approach to provide individualized, goal-directed, nursing care by:
  - Performing comprehensive nursing assessments of patients.
  - Making nursing diagnoses that serve as the basis for the strategy of care.
  - Developing a plan of nursing care.
  - Implementing nursing interventions.
  - Evaluating the patient's responses to nursing care.
- Teaches and counsels patients as part of the implementation phase of the nursing process.
- Initiates, delivers, assigns or delegates certain interventions within the plan of care for patients within legal, ethical and regulatory parameters with a focus on patient safety.
  - The RN considers a UAP's education, training, skill, competence, and physical and emotional abilities.
  - RNs may supervise LVNs. Supervision is defined as directing, guiding and influencing the outcome of an LVN's performance and activity. The RN may have to directly observe and evaluate the nursing care provided depending on the LVN's skills and competence, patient conditions and emergencies.
  - The RN is responsible for supervising unlicensed personnel when tasks are delegated. The proximity of supervision depends on patient conditions and skill level of the unlicensed personnel.

UAP: Unlicensed Assistive Personnel

The above is a synopsis of how the scope of practice for licensed vocational nurses differs from registered nurses in Texas. The Licensed Vocational Nurse Scope of Practice and Registered Nurse Scope of Practice Position Statements are accessible on the BON webpage at www.bon.texas.gov under the "Practice" menu tab. The level and impact of the nursing process differs between the RN and LVN as well as between the different levels of RN education according to the Board's Differentiated Essential Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs.

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