

# The Standards of Practice for the Licensed Practical Nurse in the State of New Jersey



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### THE MEMBERS OF NURSING SERVICES IN NEW JERSEY HEALTH AGENCIES TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH DUTIES MAY BE ASSIGNED TO THE LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE.

The Licensed Practical Nurse participates in the nursing care of patients within the scope of the legal definition contained in the Nursing Practice Act (P.L. 1947, c. 262, as amended).

The practice of nursing as a registered professional nurse is defined as diagnosing and treating human responses to actual or potential physical and emotional health problems, through such services as casefinding, health teaching, health counseling, and provision of care supportive to or restorative of life and well-being, and executing medical regimen as prescribed by a licensed or otherwise legally authorized physician or dentist. Diagnosing in the context of nursing practice means the identification of and discrimination between physical and psychosocial signs and symptoms essential to effective execution and management of the nursing regimen. Such diagnostic privilege is distinct from a medical diagnosis. Treating means selection and performance of those therapeutic measures essential to the effective management and execution of the nursing regimen. Human response means those signs, symptoms and processes which denote the individual's health need or reaction to an actual or potential health problem.

The practice of nursing as a licensed practical nurse is defined as performing tasks and responsibilities within the framework of casefinding; reinforcing the patient and family teaching program through health teaching, health counseling and provision of supportive and restorative care, under the direction of a registered nurse or licensed or otherwise legally authorized physician or dentist.

#### THE LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE SHOULD ACCEPT ONLY THOSE ASSIGNMENTS FOR WHICH HE OR SHE HAS BEEN PREPARED ACCORDING TO STATE LAW.

The Licensed Practical Nurse gives direct patient care and functions as an integral part of the nursing team. The Licensed Practical Nurse works independently in situations relatively free from complexity as a private practitioner in the home where she has a minimum of on-the-spot supervision from a professional nurse or the patient's physician. She also works with the Registered Professional Nurse in more complex situations, such as in hospitals or home health agencies.

The limitations of the Licensed Practical Nurse's role are not so much in the nursing procedures which may or may not be performed, but in the individual situation and its requirement for safe nursing care. Whether a particular technique or procedure is within the sphere in which the Licensed Practical Nurse may practice, or should be performed only by a Registered Professional Nurse, depends upon the nature of judgment required to perform the procedure safely.

In each health agency, the responsibility for proper use of the Licensed Practical Nurse rests with the Registered Professional Nurse who assesses the nursing needs of patients and accordingly makes assignments, evaluates personnel competencies, and supervises activities. The Registered Professional Nurse decides in which situations the Licensed Practical Nurse can be permitted self-direction and in which the Licensed Practical Nurse must work in a close relationship with the Registered Professional Nurse.

The following considerations should be used in determining whether a particular practitioner will perform a procedure or function for a specific patient:

1. THE PATIENT'S
  - a. condition
  - b. type of supportive care and instruction required
  - c. emotional and socioeconomic needs

## 2. THE PR CAL NURSE PRACTITIONERS

- a. understanding of the procedure or function based upon educational preparation
- b. ability and skill, acquired and demonstrated
- c. amount and character of direction required to perform the procedure or function

Both the employing agency and the individual practitioner have a responsibility for the continuous development of knowledge and skills of each employee. Ongoing in-service education, based on individual needs, is one means of helping the Licensed Practical Nurse perfect skills and keep abreast of changing trends in the practice of nursing. Each employee needs to be evaluated individually, since every person varies in the extent of abilities. The value of the Licensed Practical Nurse as a member of the nursing team is determined by the extent to which contribution is made to the quality as well as the quantity of patient care.

A Registered Professional Nurse has the ultimate responsibility for nursing service, including recommending the assignment of all nursing personnel. In situations which are complex, a Registered Professional Nurse must be immediately available for direct care, when necessary, or for guidance and consultation.

*The following material should be used as a guide but it does not attempt to give an all-inclusive list of procedures and functions for the Licensed Practical Nurse. Each individual agency should, through a nursing practice committee or similar group, prepare its own list in line with its philosophy and objectives of nursing care. Any doubt or question about a particular procedure should be directed to the New Jersey State Board of Nursing*

### THE LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE GIVES NURSING CARE IN SITUATIONS RELATIVELY FREE OF COMPLEXITY

#### FUNCTIONS

I. Performs those nursing procedures for which the Licensed Practical Nurse has had an appropriate amount of preparation.

##### Subfunctions:

A. Assistance to the patient with activities of daily living and encouragement of appropriate self care.

##### Examples:

- (1) Assists patient as required in personal hygiene, grooming, comfort, rest and nourishment, including tube feeding;
- (2) Assists the patient with simple exercises as prescribed

B. Administration of treatments.

##### Examples:

- (1) Applies dressings utilizing knowledge of sterile techniques.
- (2) Irrigates functioning and regulated colostomes and catheters.
- (3) Gives vaginal douches.
- (4) Inserts urethral catheters.
- (5) Administers oxygen specifically prescribed

C. Preparation and care of patients receiving specialized treatments.

##### Examples:

- (1) Gives pre-operative and post-operative care.
- (2) Assists physician with treatments, examinations, tests, etc.

(3) Maintains or discontinues infusions.

- a. Adds second bottle to an existing intravenous infusion.
- b. Discontinues an infusion.

D. Performance of special nursing techniques in caring for patients with communicable diseases.

##### Examples:

- (1) Maintains medical aseptic technique (i.e., gown, mask, gloves, etc., as indicated)
- (2) Disposes of patient's wastes according to accepted practice.

E. Administration of first-aid measures.

##### Examples:

- (1) Recognizes and takes immediate and appropriate steps to alleviate condition such, respiratory failure, fainting, hemorrhage, etc.
- (2) Takes immediate and appropriate steps to prevent further injury resulting from an accident.

F. Administration of medications depending upon knowledge of actions and reactions.

##### Examples:

- (1) Gives medications orally, sub-cutaneously, intramuscularly, by instillation  
  - a. Unit dosage properly labeled
  - b. Pre-calculated dosage
  - c. "P. R. N." to patient with stable condition.

H. Observes, records, and reports nursing facts.

##### Subfunctions:

A. Recognition of signs and symptoms indicative of changes in the general physical mental condition of the patient.

##### Examples:

(1) Observes and reports:

- a. Vital signs
- b. Alterations of skin
- c. Alterations of body emission
- d. Restlessness and listlessness.

B. Recognition and understanding of stresses in human relationships.

##### Examples:

- (1) Observes alterations in behavior:  
  - a. Mood
  - b. Communication

III. Assists in rehabilitating patients

##### Subfunctions:

A. Awareness and encouragement of the interests and special aptitudes of patients.

##### Examples:

- (1) Encourages:  
  - a. Use of purposeful activities required in daily living
  - b. Divisional activities.

B. Knowledge and application of the principles of prevention of deformities.

##### Examples:

- (1) Assists the patient with normal range of joint motion
- (2) Applies principles of body mechanics and body alignment

- C. Utilization of community services based on knowledge of programs and mechanics for referrals.
  - Examples:
    - (1) Assists patient and family in awareness and understanding of help available in the home through community services.
- IV. Provides for the physical comfort and safety of patients.
  - Subfunctions:
    - A. Consideration of the needs of the patient for a safe, attractive and comfortable environment.
      - Examples:
        - (1) Removes and reports accident hazards.
        - (2) Regulates room temperature, ventilation and lighting.
        - (3) Maintains a neat and clean environment.
    - B. Preparation and after-care of equipment.
      - Examples:
        - (1) Cleans and sterilizes equipment.
- V. Provides for the emotional support of patients.
  - Subfunctions:
    - A. Recognition and understanding of psycho-social, cultural, religious and economic needs of people.
      - Examples:
        - (1) Respects religious beliefs of the individual patient.
        - (2) Respects traditional patterns and mores of cultural groups.
        - (3) Is aware of the here and now needs.
        - (4) Is aware of financial burden and its effect on patient care in the home.
- VI. Acts in a health service capacity.
  - Subfunctions:
    - A. Participation in the development, revision, and implementation of policies designed to insure safety and comfort of patients and personnel.
      - Examples:
        - (1) Participates on agency and community committees.
        - (2) Contributes to team conferences.
        - (3) Actively participates in safety programs and community projects.
    - B. Promotion of cooperative effort through understanding the functions of all personnel involved in patient care.
      - Examples:
        - (1) Has an appreciation of the functions of all levels of agency personnel.
        - (2) Knows channels of authority and lines of communication.
    - C. Utilizes opportunities in contacts to promote better understanding of the health service.
      - Examples:
        - (1) Is available during visiting hours to answer or refer questions.
        - (2) Reinforces the patient and family teaching program.
        - (3) Utilizes opportunities to promote good public relations.

IN MORE COMPLEX SITUATIONS THE LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE FUNCTIONS  
AS AN ASSISTANT TO THE REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL NURSE

FUNCTIONS

- I. Works in specialized care units under the immediate direction and supervision Registered Professional Nurse.
- II. Participates in the planning and evaluation of nursing care under the guidance Registered Professional Nurse.