



STATE OF IOWA

Governor Terry E. Branstad
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds

BOARD OF NURSING
Kathleen R. Weinberg, MSN, RN
Executive Director

Memorandum

TO: Melissa Walker, RN

FROM: Kathy Weinberg, Executive Director
Jimmy A. Reyes, Associate Director

DATE: August 19, 2014

SUBJECT: Practice and Regulation of School Nurses

KW
JR

This memo is in response to recent conversations regarding the practice and regulation of school nurses in Iowa. Included in this memo are excerpts from the Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Code, which addresses the scope of practice of the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Registered Nurse (RN), and Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP).

In summary, the school nurse shall be a Registered Nurse. The Licensed Practical Nurse may not be employed or practice as an independent school nurse. However, an LPN may practice nursing in the school setting under the supervision and direction of an RN or physician in the same building. The LPN may also provide nursing care to a specific student under the supervision and delegation of an RN employed by the school district.

The School Nurse

A school nurse is an individual who has successfully passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), is licensed by the Iowa Board of Nursing, and holds the title of Registered Nurse (RN).

Pursuant to 655IAC, chapter 6.2(2), the RN shall use the nursing process in the practice of nursing, consistent with accepted and prevailing practice. The nursing process is ongoing and includes: a) nursing assessments; b) formulation of a nursing diagnosis based on analysis of the data; c) planning of nursing care; d) nursing interventions; and e) evaluation of the individual's or group's status in relation to established goals and the plan of care.

The Licensed Practical Nurse in the School Setting

The LPN may not be employed or practice as an independent school nurse. An LPN may practice nursing in the school setting under the supervision and direction of an RN

or physician. The RN or physician shall be in the proximate area, pursuant to 655 IAC, chapter 6, 6.3(7)"b". The proximate area is defined as the RN being present in the building and readily available.

The LPN may also provide nursing care to a specific student under the supervision and delegation of an RN employed by the school district, pursuant to 655 IAC, chapter 6, 6.1 (152).

The LPN shall be permitted to provide supportive care to a specific student in the school setting in accordance with the student's health plan when under the supervision of and as delegated by the RN employed by the school district. The LPN may not perform the initiation of an assessment related to procedures/therapies requiring the knowledge or skill level ascribed to the registered nurse.

The Health Paraprofessional in the School Setting

An individual who holds an active LPN license or who has been licensed as an LPN may be hired in the position of a Health Paraprofessional. This employee must specifically and exclusively work under the job description of the Health Paraprofessional, which would never extend into the role of the Licensed Practical Nurse.

The following guidelines shall be followed for the LPN hired in the Health Paraprofessional role:

- The LPN shall not use the title LPN after their name.
- The LPN shall not practice nursing, including, but not limited to, performing an assessment, using nursing judgment, providing education and counseling.
- The LPN shall meet the requirements for the position of the Health Paraprofessional.
- The LPN shall work specifically and exclusively under the job description of the Health Paraprofessional.
- The LPN is held accountable under his or her licensure should they practice nursing.

At this time, there are no laws or Iowa Board of Nursing rules that would prohibit an LPN from working in a position that is below the level of her/his licensure. However, the Board has previously determined that the nurse who does so is held to the highest level of her/his education. If a nurse is working in a position lower than the nurse's licensure and fails to act prudently based on education preparation, the nurse's license would be subject to sanction by the Board.

The Unlicensed Assistive Personnel in the School Setting

The Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP) refers to an individual who is trained to function in an assistive role with the RN and LPN in the provision of nursing care activities as delegated by the RN or LPN.

The Delegation Process

Individuals licensed or non-licensed do not work under another individual's licensure. With that said, accountability does come into play with the act of delegation. It is the responsibility of the delegating RN to use the delegation process. The delegating RN must ensure the task/function is appropriate to delegate, the individual student is appropriate under the right circumstance, the individual being delegated the task is educated and competent, and supervision, communication, and evaluation are being carried out. Additionally, there must be School District policies and procedures and the documentation of personnel's education and competency.

If the delegating RN has carried out the delegation process correctly and makes the decision to delegate, then the next step would be that the nurse or unlicensed personnel would be able to carry out the task/function following proper technique and following facility policy and procedure. Activities and functions which are beyond the scope of practice of the LPN may not be delegated to UAP.

The Educational Preparation of Nurses

The education and competency of an LPN, RN, and Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP) varies. The LPN is educated at the community college setting with an estimated graduation period of one year. The RN is educated at the community college, college, or university setting. The RN who graduates from a community college has attended school for at least two years and receives an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN). The RN with a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN) has at least four years of education and training. The ARNP is a Master's or Doctorate prepared advanced practice degree. ARNPs have at least 7 to 8 years of education and training.

The Licensure of Nurses and Advanced Practice Nurses

To sit for licensure, the LPN, RN, and ARNP must graduate from a nursing education program whose status has been recognized by the Iowa Board of Nursing or by a similar board in another jurisdiction, which prepares individuals for licensure.

The board shall issue a license by examination for a 24 to 36-month period for the initial renewal. When the license is renewed again, it will be placed on a three-year renewal cycle. Expiration shall be on the fifteenth day of the birth month.

Board approval of an applicant with a criminal conviction history or a record of prior disciplinary action is also required prior to licensure.

Kathy Weinberg, MSN, RN
Email: Kathy.weinberg@iowa.gov
Phone: 515-281-4822

Jimmy A. Reyes, DNP, RN
Email: Jimmy.reyes@iowa.gov
Phone: 515-281-4828