



Arkansas State Board of Nursing

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Position Statement

97-1

The Performance of Stapling, Suturing, or Application of Tissue Adhesive, for Superficial Wound Closure by Nurses in the Operating Room

Statutory Definition

Arkansas Code Annotated §17-87-102 defines "Practice of professional nursing" as:". . .the performance for compensation of any acts involving the observation, care, and counsel of the ill, injured, or infirm; the maintenance of health or prevention of illness of others; the supervision and teaching of other personnel; the delegation of certain nursing practices to other personnel as set forth in regulations established by the Board; or the administration of medications and treatments as prescribed by practitioners authorized to prescribe and treat in accordance with state law, where such acts require substantial specialized judgment and skill based on knowledge and application of the principles of biological, physical, and social sciences".

“. . .the Practice of practical nursing” means the performance for compensation of acts involving the care of the ill, injured, infirm or the delegation of certain nursing practices to other personnel as set forth in regulations established by the board under the direction of a registered professional nurse, an advanced practice nurse, a license physician, or a licensed dentist, which acts do not require the substantial specialized skill, judgment, and knowledge required in professional nursing;”

“Practice of psychiatric technician nursing” means the performance for compensation of acts involving the care of the physically and mentally ill, retarded, injured, or infirm or the delegation of certain nursing practices to other personnel as set forth in regulations established by the board, and the carrying our of medical orders under the direction of registered professional nurse, and advanced practice nurse, a licensed physician, or a licensed dentist, where such activities do not require the substantial specialized skill, judgment, and knowledge required in professional nursing.”

Position Statement

Numerous inquiries regarding the roles of nurses in the performance of stapling, suturing, or application of tissue adhesive has been received by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing. After study of the issues and concerns, the Arkansas State Board of Nursing issued the following position statement:

Stapling and Suturing

The performance of stapling, suturing or application of tissue adhesive for **superficial wound closure, as delegated by the attending surgeon in the operating room**, is within the scope of nursing practice; however, the suturing of muscle, nerve, fascia, or tendon is not within the scope of their practice

Nurses who perform stapling, suturing or application of tissue adhesive for superficial wound closure are responsible for having adequate preparation and experience to perform such acts and shall have documented competency with performance of such procedures. The nurse is responsible for documentation of educational preparation and for maintaining continuing competency.

In the performance of stapling, suturing, or application of tissue adhesive for superficial wound closure, the nurse should:

- 1) Have knowledge of the potential complications and adverse reactions, which may result from the procedure(s),
- 2) Have the knowledge and ability to recognize adverse reactions and to take appropriate nursing intervention as indicated, and
- 3) Perform the procedure(s) in accordance with the established written agency policies and procedures, which are consistent with the definition of "professional nursing practice", "practice of practical nursing" and "licensed psychiatric technician nurse" as stated in Arkansas Code Annotated §17-87-102.

Determining Scope of Practice

Arkansas Code Annotated § 17-87-309 and ASBN *Rules*, Chapter 9, Section XV.A.6.f. 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.

Adopted March 13, 1997
Revised November 2001
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