Arkansas Department of Health

Arkansas State Board of Nursing
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POSITION STATEMENT
98-6
Decision-Making Model

The attached Decision-Making Model has been adopted by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing:

Adopted November 1998
Revised January 1999
Reviewed January 10, 2013

ASBN Position Statement 98-6

DECISION MAKING MODEL

The following statement, the Decision Making Model, is provided for reference when making decisions about your scope of practice.

The mission of the Arkansas State Board of Nursing is to protect the public and act as their advocate by effectively regulating the practice of nursing.

The profession of nursing is a dynamic discipline. Practice potentials change and develop in response to health care needs of society, technical advancements, and the expansion of scientific knowledge. All licensed nurses share a common base of responsibility and accountability defined as the practice of nursing. However, competency based practice scopes of individual nurses may vary according to the type of basic licensure preparation, practice experiences, and professional development activities.

The parameters of the practice scopes are defined by basic licensure preparation and advanced education. Within this scope of practice, all nurses should remain current and increase their expertise and skill in a variety of ways, e.g., practice experience, in-service education, and continuing education. Practice responsibility, accountability, and relative levels of independence are also expanded in this way.



The licensed nurse is responsible and accountable, both professionally and legally, for determining his/her personal scope of nursing practice. Since the role and responsibilities of nurses, and consequently the scope of nursing practice, is ever changing and increasing in complexity, it is important that the nurse makes decisions regarding his/her own scope of practice.

THE PRACTICE OF NURSING

The Practice of Professional (Registered) Nursing:

The delivery of health care services which require assessment, diagnosis, planning, intervention, and evaluation fall within the professional nurse scope of practice.

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;
- administration of medications and treatments

where such acts require substantial specialized judgment and skill based on knowledge and application of the principles of biological, physical and social sciences.

ACA § 17-87-102 (10) (A-E)

The Practice of Advanced Practice Registered Nursing:

The advanced practice registered nurse shall practice in accordance with the scope of practice defined by the appropriate national certifying body and the standards set forth in the ASBN *Rules*. The advanced practice registered nurse may provide health care for which the APRN is educationally prepared and for which competence has been attained and maintained.

The delivery of health care services for compensation by professional nurses who have gained additional knowledge and skills through successful completion of an organized program of nursing education that certifies nurses for advanced practice roles as advanced nurse practitioners, certified nurse anesthetists, certified nurse midwives and clinical nurse specialists.

ACA § 17-87-102 (4) (A-B)

The Practice of Registered Nurse Practitioner Nursing:

The delivery of health care services for compensation in collaboration with and under the direction of a licensed physician or under the direction of protocols developed with a licensed physician. ACA § 17-87-102 (12) (A-B)

The Practice of Practical Nursing:

The delivery of health care services which are performed under the direction of the professional nurse, licensed physician, or licensed dentist, including observation, intervention, and evaluation, fall within the LPN/LPTN scope of practice.

The performance for compensation of acts involving:

- the care of the ill, injured, or infirm;
- the delegation of certain nursing practices to other personnel

under the direction of a registered professional nurse, an advanced practice registered nurse, a licensed physician or a licensed dentist, which acts do not require the substantial specialized skill, judgement, and knowledge required in professional nursing. ACA § 17-87-102 (9)

The Practice of Psychiatric Technician Nursing:

The performance for compensation of acts involving:

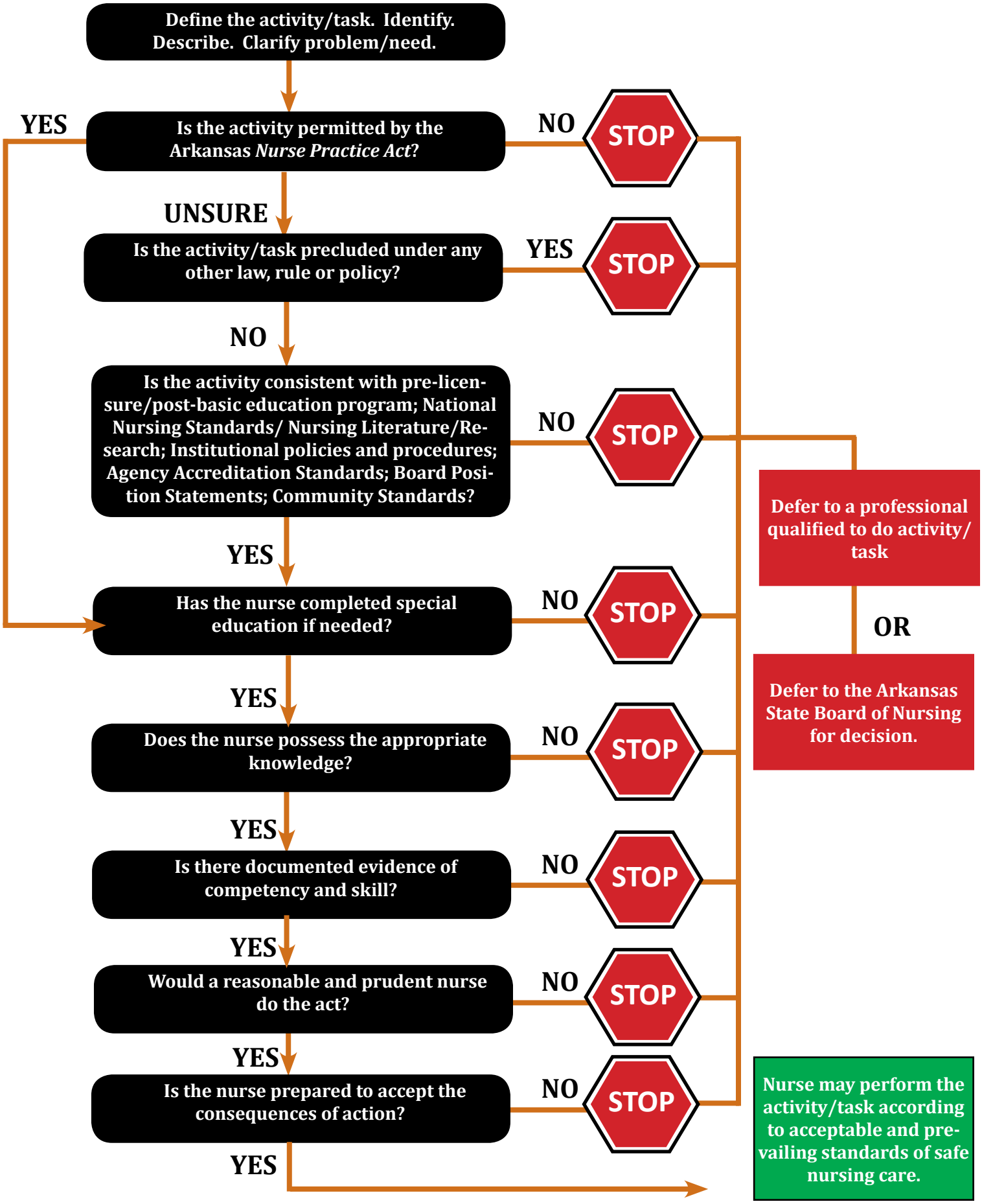
- the care of the physically and mentally ill, retarded, injured, or infirm;
- the delegation of certain nursing practices to other personnel

the carrying out of medical orders under the direction of a registered professional nurse, an advanced practice registered 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.

ACA § 17-87-102 (11)

Arkansas State Board of Nursing

SCOPE OF PRACTICE DECISION MAKING MODEL



DECISION MAKING PROCESS

1. **Define the Activity/Task:**
   Clarify what is the problem or need?
   Who are the people involved in the decision?
   What is the decision to be made and where (what setting or organization) will it take place?
   Why is the question being raised now?
   Has it been discussed previously?

2. Is the activity permitted by Arkansas *Nurse Practice Act*?
NO – Stop. Defer the activity/task to a professional qualified to do the activity/task or to the Arkansas State Board of Nursing for a decision. Yes – Go to Question # 5 – Special education needed? Unsure -- Go to Question # 3 – Precluded by other law, rule, or policy?

3. Is activity/task precluded under any other law, rule or policy?
No – Go to Question #4 – Consistent with…. Yes -- Stop. Defer the activity/task to a professional qualified to do the activity/task or to the Arkansas State Board of Nursing for a decision.

4. Is the activity consistent with:
Pre-licensure/post-basic education program National Nursing Standards Nursing Literature/Research Institutional policies and procedures Agency Accreditation Standards Board Position Statements Community Standards? No -- Stop. Defer the activity/task to a professional qualified to do the activity/task or to the Arkansas State Board of Nursing for a decision. Yes – Go to Question # 5 – Special education needs?

5. Has the nurse completed special education if needed?
No -- Stop. Defer the activity/task to a professional qualified to do the activity/task or to the Arkansas State Board of Nursing for a decision. Yes – Go to Question # 6 – Possess appropriate knowledge?

6. Does nurse possess appropriate knowledge?
No -- Stop. Defer the activity/task to a professional qualified to do the activity/task or to the Arkansas State Board of Nursing for a decision. Yes – Go to Question #7—Documented competency?

7. Is there documented evidence of competency & skill?
No -- Stop. Defer the activity/task to a professional qualified to do the activity/task or to the Arkansas State Board of Nursing for a decision. Yes – Go to Question #8 – Reasonable & prudent nurse?

8. Would a reasonable & prudent nurse perform the act?
No -- Stop. Defer the activity/task to a professional qualified to do the activity/task or to the Arkansas State Board of Nursing for a decision. Yes – Go to Question #9 – Prepared to accept consequences?

9. Is nurse prepared to accept the consequences of action?
No -- Stop. Defer the activity/task to a professional qualified to do the activity/task or to the Arkansas State Board of Nursing for a decision. Yes – Nurse may perform the activity/task according to acceptable and prevailing standards of nursing care.

GUIDELINES *for* DECISION MAKING

The nurse is constantly involved in the decision-making and problem solving process, whether as a staff nurse or a manager, regardless of the practice setting. Although their perspectives are different the process is the same. The following steps are basic to the process.

Clarify:

What is the problem or need?
Who are the people involved in the decision?
What is the decision to be made and where (what setting or organization) will it take place?
Why is the question being raised now?
Has it been discussed previously?

Assess:

What are your resources?
What are your strengths?
What skills and knowledge are required?
What or who is available to assist you?

Identify Options:

What are possible solutions?
What are the characteristics of an ideal solution?
Is it feasible?
What are the risks?
What are the costs?
Are they feasible?
What are the implications of your decision?
How serious are the consequences?

Point of Decision:

What is the best decision?
When should it be done?
By whom?
What are the implications or consequences of your decision?
How will you judge the effectiveness of your decision?

APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES FOR DECISION MAKING

Clarify what it is you are being asked to do:

Gather facts that may influence the decision.

- Are there written policies and procedures available to describe how and under what conditions you will perform this task?
- Does the new responsibility require professional judgment or simply the acquisition of a new skill?
- Is this a new expectation for all RNs? LPNs? LPTNs?
- Has this been done before by others in your unit or health care facility?
- Is it just new to you?
- What about the other facilities in your community or region?
- What are the nurse manager's expectations about you or other RNs, LPNs, LPTNs, becoming responsible for this procedure?
- When will this become effective?
- Will there be an opportunity to help you attain the needed clinical competency?
- Who will be responsible for the initial supervision and evaluation of this newly performed task?
- Will you be given additional time to learn the skill if you need it?

Assess:

- Are you clinically competent to perform this procedure?
- Do you currently have the knowledge and skills to perform the procedure?
- Have you had experience in previous jobs with this procedure?
- Who is available to assist you who has that skill and knowledge?
- Is that person accessible to you?
- Do you believe you will be able to learn the new skill in the allotted time?
- How can you determine that you are practicing within your scope of nursing?
- What is the potential outcome for the patient if you do or do not perform the procedure?

Identify options and implications of your decision. The options include:

- The responsibility/task is not prohibited by the *Nurse Practice Act*.

If you believe that you can provide safe patient care based upon your current knowledge base, or with additional education and skill practice, you are ready to accept this new responsibility. You will then be ethically and legally responsible for performing this new procedure at an acceptable level of competency.

If you believe you will be unable to perform the new task competently, then further discussion with the nurse manager is necessary. At this point you may also ask to consult with the next level of management or nurse executive so that you can talk about the various perspectives of this issue.

It is important that you continue to assess whether this is an isolated situation just affecting you, or whether there are broader implications. In other words, is this procedure new to you, but nurses in other units or health care facilities with similar patient populations already are performing? To what do you relate your reluctance to accept this new responsibility? Is it a work load issue or is it a competency issue?

At this point, it is important for you to be aware of the legal rights of your employer. Even though you may have legitimate concerns for patient safety and your own legal accountability in providing competent care, your employer has the legal right to initiate employee disciplinary action, including termination, if you refuse to accept an assigned task. Therefore, it is important to continue to explore options in a positive manner, recognizing that both you and your employer share the responsibility for safe patient care. Be open to alternatives.

In addition, consider resources which you can use for additional information and support. These include your professional organization, both state and national and various publications. The American Nurses Association Code for Nurses, standards on practice, and your employer's policies and procedures manuals are valuable resources. The *Nurse Practice Act* serves as your guide for the legal definition of nursing and the parameters that indicate deviation from or violation of the law.

Point of decision/Implications. Your decision maybe:

Accept the newly assigned task. You have now made an agreement with your employer to incorporate this new responsibility, under the conditions outlined in the procedure manual. You are now legally accountable for its performance.

Agree to learn the new procedure according to the plans established by the employer for your education, skills practice and evaluation. You will be responsible for letting your nurse manager know when you feel competent to perform this skill. Make sure that documentation is in your personnel file validating this additional education. If you do not believe you are competent enough to proceed after the initial inservice, then it is your responsibility to let the educator and nurse manager know you need more time. Together you can develop an action plan for gaining competency.

Refuse to accept the newly assigned task. You will need to document your concerns for patient safety as well as the process you use to inform your employer of your decisions. Keep a personal copy of this documentation and send a copy to the nurse executive. Courtesy requires you also send a copy to your nurse manager. When you refuse to accept the assigned task, be prepared to offer options such as transfer to another unit (if this new role is just for your unit) or perhaps a change in work assigned tasks with your colleagues. Keep in mind though, when you refuse an assignment you may face disciplinary action, so it is important that you be familiar with your employer's grievance procedure.

For additional information on the *Nurse Practice Act, Rules* and Position Statements, go to the ASBN website, www.arsbn.org

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