

Consideration of Position Statement 15.13 Role of LVNs and RNs as School Nurses

Summary of Request

Board Position Statements do not have the force of law, but are a means of providing direction for nurses on issues of concern to the Board relevant to protection of the public.

Overview of Proposed Changes

Position Statement 15.13, Role of LVNs and RNs as School Nurses has several proposed changes. [See attachment A.] The first proposed change is to the title and aligns with the recommended addition of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) definition of a school nurse which defines the school nurse as a registered nurse. The TEA definition of a school nurse does not prohibit LVNs from working in school health; therefore, the guidance in the position statement for LVNs working in school health remains unchanged. In addition, there are a few corrections and editorial changes to the wording within the position statement for clarity.

Pros and Cons

Pros:

Adoption of the position statement with proposed changes will provide nurses with the definition of a school nurse according to TEA and further guidance to RNs and LVNs working in school health.

Cons:

None noted.

Recommendation of Board Staff: Move to adopt Position Statement 15.13, Role of LVNs and RNs in School Health, with allowance for non-substantive word editing for purposes of clarity as may be deemed necessary by Board staff.

15.13 Role of LVNs and RNs ~~as School Nurses~~ in School Health

The Board of Nursing (BON) recognizes that the youth of Texas are our most valuable natural resource. The BON acknowledges that although students come to school with complex and diverse health care needs, they should be provided an education in the least restrictive environment. The BON recognizes that the school children of Texas have the right to receive safe, appropriate, specialized health services that may be required to assure the child's inclusion in the school environment.

Registered Nurses in the School Setting

The Texas Education Agency defines a school nurse in 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) § 153.1022 (a) (1) (D) as "... an educator employed to provide full-time nursing and health care services and who meets all the requirements to practice as a registered nurse (RN) pursuant to the Nursing Practice Act and rules and regulations relating to professional nurse education, licensure, and practice and has been issued a license to practice professional nursing in Texas.

The Board of Nursing (BON) believes that school nursing is a professional registered nursing (RN) specialty. School nursing involves the identification, prevention and intervention to remedy or modify students' health needs. The RN has the educational preparation and critical thinking skills as well as clinical expertise which are essential to nursing in the school setting. These activities involve the comprehensive assessment of the nursing/health care needs of the student, the development of a plan of care, implementation of the plan, and evaluation of the outcomes. The provision of these services by the RN contributes directly to the students' education and to the successful outcome of the educational process. These essential components of professional nursing practice are the responsibility of the RN in compliance with Rule 217.11(3)(A).

Vocational Nurses in the School Setting

The vocational nurse has a directed scope of practice under supervision of a registered nurse, advanced practice registered nurse, physician, physician assistant, podiatrist, or dentist.¹ The provision of nursing care when provided by a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) in a school setting should be under the supervision of the RN. The RN, in compliance with the BON's Standards of Nursing Practice [~~22 TAC §~~ Rule-217.11], assigns those aspects and activities to the LVN that are within the LVN's educational preparation and demonstrated competency to provide. The RN monitors, coordinates, and evaluates the provision of health services necessary to meet individual student health needs essential in achieving educational objectives.

When LVNs are utilized in the school setting and are supervised by the RN, the RN needs to consider how closely they can supervise the LVN and how the RN will direct, guide, and influence the outcome of the LVN's performance² and respond to any situations where the LVN needs onsite supervision.

RN Delegation to Unlicensed Personnel

Due to the growing number of students entering the school system with special health care needs, the BON recognizes that not all health-related services can be provided by a RN or LVN. Therefore, the RN may delegate tasks in the school setting in compliance with the BON's Delegation Rules 224 and 225. School is considered an independent living environment as

defined in Rule 225; however, acute or emergency situations in the school setting may be delegated in accordance with [the rules in both Chapter 224 and Chapter 225](#)~~Rule 224 as applicable~~. For example, [the RN may decide to delegate to an unlicensed person, the](#) emergency administration of Epi-pens, Glucagon, Diastat, oxygen, metered dose inhalers, or nebulizer treatments for the relief of acute respiratory symptoms and the use of a hand held magnet to activate a vagus nerve stimulator to prevent or control seizure activity ~~may be administered by an unlicensed person~~ under [22 TAC §224.6\(4\)](#) in order to stabilize the child and prevent complications from delaying treatment. The decision to delegate a specific task is always at the discretion of the RN in accordance with [22 TAC §224.8\(b\)\(1\)\(C\)](#) or [22 TAC §225.9\(c\)](#).

Other Laws Impacting School Health Care

In a school setting, the administration of medication may be assigned to an unlicensed person by the public school official in accordance with the rules of the Texas Education Code. The RN's obligation under [22 TAC §225.13](#) is to (1) verify the training of the unlicensed person, and (2) verify the competency of the unlicensed person to perform the task safely. If the RN is unable to assure (1) and (2) have been met, the RN must (b) notify the public school official of the situation.

Summary

Given the complexity, the current number, and the future projections of increasing numbers of children entering the school system with complex nursing and health-related needs, the BON believes that the RN must establish an individualized nursing care plan for each child as applicable. The RN may be assisted by LVNs and unlicensed assistive personnel in the delivery of services to ensure the delivery of safe, effective health care to the school children of Texas.

¹ Tex. Occ. Code, Section 301.353 and 22 Tex. Admin. Code §217.11 (2)

² 22 Tex. Admin. Code §217.11 (2)

(Adopted 11/1996, Revised 11/1997; 01/2003; 01/2005; 01/2008; 01/2009; 01/2011; 01/2013; [07/2013](#))

(Reviewed - 01/2006; 01/2007; 01/2010; 01/2012)