

UTILIZATION OF UNLICENSED HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL

The mission of the Missouri State Board of Nursing is to assure safe and effective nursing care in the interest of public protection. The Board of Nursing has the legal responsibility to regulate nursing and provide guidance regarding the utilization of unlicensed health care personnel. The Board acknowledges that there is a need and a place for competent, appropriately supervised unlicensed health care personnel to assist, but not replace, licensed nurses.

Unlicensed health care personnel who perform specific nursing care tasks without benefit of instruction, delegation, and supervision by licensed nurses may be engaged in the practice of nursing without a license. Such actions by unlicensed health care personnel are a violation of the Missouri Nursing Practice Act [335.066(10), RSMo]. Unlicensed health care personnel remain personally accountable for their own actions.

The Missouri State Board of Nursing recognizes that activities of unlicensed health care personnel need to be monitored to protect the health, welfare, and safety of the public. Registered professional nurses may teach, delegate, and supervise licensed practical nurses and unlicensed health care personnel in the performance of certain nursing care tasks [335.016(15)(e), RSMo; 20 CSR 2200-5.1010 Definitions]. Under the direction/supervision of registered professional nurses or persons licensed by a state regulatory board to prescribe medications and treatments, licensed practical nurses may teach, delegate, and supervise unlicensed health care personnel in the performance of specific nursing care tasks [335.016(14), RSMo; 20 CSR 2200-5.1010 Definitions].

Registered professional nurses and licensed practical nurses must make reasonable and prudent judgments regarding the appropriateness of delegating selected nursing care tasks to unlicensed health care workers. Licensed nurses must ensure that unlicensed health care personnel have documented, demonstrated evidence of appropriate education, training, skills, and experience to accomplish the task safely. Carrying out responsible and accountable supervisory behavior after specific nursing care tasks are delegated to unlicensed health care personnel is critical to the health, welfare, and safety of patients [335.016(15)(e), RSMo; 20 CSR 2200-5.1010 Definitions]. Licensed nurses who delegate retain accountability for the tasks delegated.

To assist licensed nurses to competently perform the critical processes involved in delegating, the Missouri State Board of Nursing subscribes to the use of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing's concept paper on delegation and delegation decision-making tree available at the National Council of State Board of Nursing's web site address, www.ncsbn.org and search "delegation".

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