



# PRACTICE STATEMENT

## The Role of the Nurse Employed Below Licensure Level

### Nursing Practice Statement NP 02

Developed: 2017

The American Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Nurses* states that the nurse:

The nurse practice with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.

The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.

The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient.

The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care.

The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.

The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care.

The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.

The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.

The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and integrate principles of social justice into nursing and health policy.

## STATEMENT

In accordance with the *Code of Ethics for Nurses*, the intent of this statement is to provide guidelines for nurses practicing below their licensure level. The nurse's role must be consistent with professional standards as developed by the nursing profession, the scope of practice as defined in the Law, and the rules promulgated by the Board of Nursing. All licensed nurses have a responsibility to ensure optimal patient safety and welfare.

While it is expected that all licensed nurses will work to the extent permitted by law, it is acknowledged that some may not be able to find a suitable position immediately after licensure. An example could be the APRN continuing to work in an acute care setting as an RN while awaiting credentialing, etc. for an expanded role.

According to the Ohio Board of Nursing FAQs for Registered and Licensed Practical Nurses, there is no prohibition against working below licensure levels. When a nurse chooses to do so, the nurse should not identify him/herself as a nurse.

The nurse working below licensure level would still be required to act prudently based on educational preparation and would be held to that standard. The nurse working below licensure would still be required to maintain current knowledge of the duties, responsibilities, and accountabilities for practicing within their respective scopes of practice and for safe nursing practice.

An LPN or any other unlicensed person may not supervise an RN's nursing practice. An unlicensed person may, however, supervise basic employment issues.

## REFERENCES

*Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements*, 2015, American Nurses Association

Ohio Board of Nursing *RN and LPN Practice FAQs*:

<http://www.nursing.ohio.gov/PDFS/Practice/RN-LPN%20FAQs%202015.pdf>

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