

## **Delegation of Nursing Care Activities**

The American Nephrology Nurses Association (ANNA) believes every individual with kidney disease has the right to care from professional registered nurses (RNs) that encompasses all aspects of the nursing process and meets or exceeds the *ANNA Nephrology Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (2022) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Conditions for Coverage (2008). Each RN must comply with the scope of practice, regulations, laws, and licensure requirements of the state(s) in which they practice.

The RN is accountable for the safety of all individuals within their care.

### **Background and Rationale**

The relationship between the RN and the patient constitutes a legal and binding contract. The existence of this contract has been established through case law.

Delegation is an essential nursing skill (NCSBN & ANA, 2019). ANNA recognizes the contributions of licensed personnel, including licensed practical nurses/licensed vocational nurses (LPNs/LVNs) and unlicensed personnel including but not limited to medical assistants (MAs), patient care technicians (PCTs), and certified clinical hemodialysis technicians (CCHTs) in the delivery of care for individuals with kidney disease. In the current state of the workforce crisis, health policy initiatives have challenged the role of the RN in the care of individuals with kidney disease and it is essential that all members of the nursing team is functioning within their scope of practice, refer to ANNA Position Statement The Role of the Registered Nurse in Nephrology. Each state has a nurse practice act or state statute equivalent that is the legal authority for nursing practice in the respective state. These statutes address delegation of care activities and may limit the delegation of nursing care activities or interventions to licensed and unlicensed personnel. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) at [www.ncsbn.org](http://www.ncsbn.org) provides links to each state board of nursing

**It is the position of ANNA that: Delegation is an essential competency for the RN and the RN is accountable for all delegation.**

- The RN uses critical thinking and professional judgment when following the Five **Rights** of Delegation to ensure the delegation or assignment is:
  - a) The **right** task
    - The delegated activity must fall within the delegatee's job description and scope of practice.
    - The knowledge and expertise derived from the completion of a nursing education program and the specialized skill, judgment, and decision making of a RN must not be delegated.
  - b) Under the **right** circumstance
    - This is determined by the condition of the patient, the competence of the delegatee, and the degree of supervision that will be required of the RN if a task is delegated.

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- c) To the **right** person (per State Nurse Practice Act/State Statute Equivalent)
  - Care activities must be within the delegatee's skill/knowledge set, certification requirements, practice setting, scope of practice, and the licensure requirements in effect in the state in which the RN is employed. Additional specific facility/agency policies and procedures related to delegation also may apply. Facility and agency policies must adhere to the State Nurse Practice Act and the *Nephrology Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (2022).
  - RNs need to be provided access to the delegatee's training and education specific to the delegated responsibilities.
- d) With the **right** directions and communication
  - The RN shall instruct the licensed/unlicensed personnel in the delegated nursing care activity with a clear concise description, including its objective, limits, and expectations and verify the individual's competency to perform the activity.
  - The delegatee must understand the delegated task and agree to perform the activity.
- e) Under the **right** supervision, evaluation, and feedback
  - Persons to whom tasks are delegated are encouraged to ask questions and/or request clarification of expectations.
  - The RN is responsible for monitoring the delegated activity and evaluating individual outcomes.
- The RN must never delegate a nursing care activity that requires:
  - a) Elements of the Nursing Process: the foundation of the RN's decision-making, practice, and provision of care.
    - Assessment: The RN completes an assessment of the individual's nursing care needs before delegating any nursing intervention/activity.
    - Diagnosis: Analyzes data to determine actual or potential problems.
    - Outcomes Identification: Outlines expected outcomes for an individual plan of care.
    - Planning: Develops a plan to achieve expected outcomes.
    - Implementation: Implements identified plan of care.
    - Coordination of care: Collaborates with the individual and interprofessional teams to achieve expected outcomes.
    - Health teaching and health promotion: Addresses individual-specific learning needs.
    - Evaluation: Evaluates goals and attainment of expected outcomes. (NCSBN & ANA, 2019)
- The RN is legally accountable and clinically responsible for the complete documentation of the entire nursing process, including aspects of the nursing care activities or interventions that are delegated to other personnel.
- The RN cannot delegate patient education. ANNA recognizes the role of licensed and unlicensed personnel in reinforcing education initially provided by the RN.
- Delegation of nursing care activities to licensed and unlicensed personnel shall comply with the following criteria:

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- a) The RN shall be accountable and responsible for all delegated nursing care activities or interventions and must be **directly** (physically present and immediately available) or **indirectly** (through written, verbal, or telecommunications) available for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the individual's response to the care provided.
  - b) Administration of medication is a nursing responsibility requiring knowledge of the indications, pharmacokinetic action, potential adverse reactions, correct dosage, and contraindications. In general, medication administration is beyond the scope of practice of unlicensed personnel. For PCTs/CHHTs in hemodialysis, the administration of medications shall be limited to those medications considered part of the routine hemodialysis treatment, that is, normal saline and heparin via the extracorporeal circuit, intradermal lidocaine, and oxygen by nasal cannula, as allowed by the State's scope of practice, organization policies, and regulatory requirements in the state in which the RN and PCT/CHHT practices.
  - c) Administration of any blood products and/or intravenous medications by infusion is a nursing responsibility and beyond the scope of practice of unlicensed personnel.
- Organizational resources must include policies and resources that support the RN's decision-making in the delegation process:
    - a) Delegation policies must include RN input into the development and maintenance of such policies.
    - b) Continuing education that reinforces an understanding of the core nephrology nursing principles necessary to recognize and manage real or potential complications that may result in adverse outcomes to the health and safety of the individual. This understanding aids in the RN's ability to assess each situation prior to delegating tasks to licensed and unlicensed personnel.
    - c) Establishing a staff mix that provides safe, competent, and representative care with RN involvement.
    - d) Ensuring, at least annually, documented competencies of licensed and unlicensed personnel, to which the RN has access, and guides the RN in the appropriate delegation of tasks.

**Note:** The Delegation of Nursing Care Activities Position Statement Addendum provides guidance on tasks that can be delegated to unlicensed personnel.

## References

- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). (2008). *Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Conditions for Coverage for End-Stage Renal Disease Facilities; Final Rule*.  
<https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/CFCsAndCoPs/Downloads/ESRDfinalrule0415.pdf>
- Gomez, NJ. (2022). *Nephrology nursing scope and standards of practice* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). American Nephrology Nurses Association.
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) and American Nurses Association (ANA). (2019). National guidelines for nursing delegation.  
<https://www.nursingworld.org/~4962ca/globalassets/practiceandpolicy/nursing-excellence/ana-position-statements/nursing-practice/ana-ncsbn-joint-statement-on-delegation.pdf>

### Suggested Readings

American Nurses Association (ANA). (2021). *Nursing: Scope and standards of practice* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.).

American Nurses Association (ANA). (2015). *Code of ethics for nurses with interpretive statements*.  
<https://www.nursingworld.org/DocumentVault/Ethics-1/Code-of-Ethics-for-Nurses.html>

Cahill, M., Painter, D., & Branch, J. (2021). The authority for certain clinical tasks performed by unlicensed patient care technicians and LPNs/LVNs in the hemodialysis setting: An update and invitation to take action. *Nephrology Nursing Journal*, 48(2), 119-129.

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