

OKLAHOMA BOARD OF NURSING
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IV Medication Administration by LPN's Statement

"Are LPN's authorized to administer IV medications?" is a question often referred to the Oklahoma Board of Nursing. While IV therapy/medication administration is not prohibited by the Oklahoma Nursing Practice Act, the following issues must be considered: training of the LPN, appropriate delegation and supervision of the LPN, and assessment of the patient.

The Oklahoma Nursing Practice Act includes in the definition of the "practice of nursing" the "administration of medications and treatments prescribed by any person authorized by state law to so prescribe." Therefore, IV therapy and medication administration may be within the scope of practice of the LPN who has appropriate educational training and under supervision.

What is appropriate training? The practicing LPN may not have been trained in IV therapy during her/his basic nursing educational program. Currently in Oklahoma, IV therapy is part of most LPN educational programs, but this has not been true for all programs in the past. Appropriate training may include training by the employer, and should be documented and maintained in the employee file. The Oklahoma Board of Nursing does not approve IV certification courses. Therefore, a licensee who advises an employer that they are IV certified may or may not have been trained as part of the certification process to perform the specific skills that the employer is requiring. The employer should verify the content of the IV certification course and also have a method to verify competency of the LPN in performing the skills required by the employer.

The LPN functions under the supervision or direction of a Registered Nurse, licensed physician or dentist. The supervising individual has responsibility to appropriately delegate tasks and skills to a qualified person working under the nurse's direction. Therefore, the RN delegating IV therapy/medication administration to an LPN working under the RN's supervision must be able to verify that the LPN has been trained and is competent to perform the skill. Additionally, the individual delegating IV therapy to the LPN has responsibility to adequately supervise the LPN. The term "supervising" is defined in the Rules of the Oklahoma Nursing Practice Act as providing guidance for accomplishing the nursing task or activity, with initial direction of the task or activity and period inspection of the actual act of accomplishing a task or activity. Lastly, the responsibility of the assessment and analysis of the assessment data to determine nursing care needs is the responsibility of the RN. The RN delegating IV medication administration to the LPN must be available to assess the patient and to analyze assessment data, as required. Availability of the RN for assessment must be considered by the RN delegating IV therapy to the LPN, such as in home health or hospice, where the RN is not usually immediately available.

Policies and procedures addressing IV therapy/medication administration must be written and available to the LPN. The LPN's job description should include IV therapy/medication administration if this is a required skill for the nursing position. The employer should have a mechanism for training and routine competency evaluation for these skills.

You may also wish to refer to the Board's document entitled "Decision Making Model for Determining RN/LPN Scope of Practice--Model for Scope of Practice Nursing Decision" which may be accessed on the Board's website at www.youroklahoma.com/nursing.