

Update and Revision of IV Scope of Practice for LPNs in Iowa

The Iowa Board of Nursing (IBON) is proposing to amend the current rules for LPNs performing IV therapy to include midline catheters and Peripherally Inserted Central Catheters (PICC). The rationale for the proposed change is that the rules have not been updated for over ten years and practice has changed over that time.

Currently, LPNs in the state of Iowa can have an expanded scope of practice that includes intravenous therapy if they attend an educational course approved by the Iowa Board of Nursing. A LPN is required to be under the supervision of a registered nurse. The education course requirement has been in place since November 1998.

The IBON formed a committee in February 2009 to review the current rules and to propose the updates. The rules were first considered by the Board of Nursing at their June 2010 meeting. Their intent to amend the scope of practice was first published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on July 14, 2010. A public hearing on the matter was held in Des Moines on September 15, 2010. The Iowa Nurses' Association (INA) spoke in favor of the planned amendments. To read the complete text of the proposed amendment, follow this link <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/ACODOCS/DOCS/07-14-2010.Bulletin.pdf>.

The IBON has published a comparison of the current rule and the proposed rule. To read this comparison, follow this link <http://www.iowa.gov/nursing/images/pdf/IV%20Current-Noticed%20Rules%20comparison.pdf>.

There is a **grassroots group opposing the proposed changes**. Many nurses in the state are just starting to hear about the proposed changes and are weighing in. Petitions by healthcare providers and public members were presented at the public hearing. **Some key points they are making are enumerated as:**

- 1) The Iowa Board of Nursing has used a rather stealth and secretive approach in proposing this change in scope and language. Notice should have been published in the IBON newsletter and there should be adequate time provided to study the issue and provide comment. The process should be much more transparent. Secrecy breeds distrust and suspicion.
- 2) The purpose of the IBON is to protect the public. Lowering the standard of care does not protect the public at a time when patients needing midline and PICC catheters are sicker with multiple comorbidities.
- 3) It has been proven many times over that the RN is the most cost effective healthcare provider. Allowing the LPN to have an expanded scope of practice while requiring supervision by a RN is not cost effective because two employees are required to provide the care that could be delivered with one.
- 4) Registered nurses are not routinely taught how to safely delegate and supervise. Employers do not routinely offer training or support in this area of responsibility.
- 5) Recent studies show that registered nurses routinely spend less than 20% of their work day in direct patient care. Any rule that further removes the registered nurse from the bedside so that she/he can supervise other caregivers adds frustration to the job and does not promote the recruitment and retention that is desperately needed.
- 6) The healthcare sector specifically seeking this rule change are the skilled nursing units in long term care. These residents are some of the most frail, complex and vulnerable of the population. They deserve the knowledge and skills provided by a registered nurse.
- 7) Caring for midline catheters and PICC lines require assessment skills that are beyond the scope of practice of an LPN.

The Iowa WOCN Affiliate encourages all members to read the proposed changes. Even though the public hearing has passed, it is not too late to express your opinion. We encourage all members to contact the members of the Administrative Rules Committee (either by letter or e-mail) to express your support or opposition.

Suggestions for contacting a legislator:

If using e-mail:

- 1) Use your personal e-mail and **NOT** your work e-mail.
- 2) In the subject line type: Oppose (or support) Board of Nursing Rule Amendment
- 3) Clearly identify yourself as a registered nurse.
- 4) Pick only one or two of the key points you want to make to support your position. You may certainly be able to think of other points that I have not listed. Keep it short and sweet.
- 5) Ask them to let you know how they intend to vote on the issue.

If using snail mail:

- 1) The first sentence should start: I am a registered nurse in the state of Iowa and I am writing in opposition (or support) or the proposed changes to the Chapter 6 Board of Nursing rule to amend the IV Scope of Practice for LPNs.
- 2) Pick one of two points to support your position.
- 3) Ask them to let you know how they intend to vote on the issue.
- 4) Keep your letter to a single page.