This Nebraska Board of Nursing advisory opinion is issued in accordance with the Nebraska Nurse Practice Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. 38-2216 (2). As such, this advisory opinion is for informational purposes only and is non-binding. The advisory opinions define acts, which in the opinion of the board, are or are not permitted in the practice of nursing.

**Nurse’s Accountability to Perform Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation**

Nurses have a professional ethical duty to provide care to persons entrusted to them for the provision of nursing and health care services (American Nurses Association [ANA], 2015). Nurses in all practice settings are accountable for initiating Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) following cardiac arrest (cessation of respirations and/or pulse).

The American Heart Association (2015) has established evidence-based decision-making guidelines for initiating CPR unless:

1. A valid Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order is in place;

2. There are obvious signs of irreversible death (e.g., rigor mortis, dependent lividity, decapitation, transection, or decomposition) are present; or

3. Initiating CPR could cause injury or peril to the rescuer
If an individual is a resident or is undergoing treatment in a facility without designated emergency support staff on site experiences a cardiac arrest nursing staff must provide basic life support, including CPR, prior to the arrival of emergency medical services:

1. In accordance with the individual’s advance directives; or
2. In the absence of advance directives or a DNR order; and
3. If the individual does not show obvious signs of irreversible death.

Current CPR certification is not required in order for the nurse to be accountable to perform resuscitation based on their assessment of the individual and their level of competency. Nurses have a professional responsibility to maintain current CPR certification for healthcare providers through a CPR provider whose training includes hands-on skills practice and in-person assessment and demonstration of skills.

References:


