

ADVISORY
OPINION

OPINION: LPN & Laboring OB patients
ADOPTED: January, 1997
REVISED:
REAFFIRMED: 5/2000

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.

LPN & Laboring Obstetrical Patients

 [Title 172 Chapter 99](#) Regulations Governing the Provision of Client Care,  [Section 003](#) define the LPN's responsibilities within the framework of the nursing process while under the direction of a RN or licensed practitioner. As identified in those regulations and within the realm of nursing needs related to the laboring obstetrical patient, the following appropriate LPN activity is identified:

Assessing: LPNs may collect basic objective and subjective data from observations, examinations, interviews and written records. The scope and depth of data collection must be consistent with the educational preparation and experience of the LPN. Objective data includes that related to physical status. Nursing LPNs are accountable to identify signs and symptoms of deviations Diagnosis from normal health status.

Planning: LPNs participate in planning by providing data and determining priorities; further, LPNs assist in identification of measures to maintain comfort and support human function and response.

Implementing: LPNs provide care for clients whose conditions are stabilized and/or predictable. Under direct supervision of the RN (or in some situations, the licensed practitioner) LPNs assist with interventions whose conditions are not stable and/or predictable.

Evaluating: LPNs contribute to the evaluation of client response to nursing interventions.

It is the opinion of the Board of Nursing that LPNs may utilize subjective client data along with observation and physical data to assist in identification of beginning labor, labor progression, and signs and symptoms of deviations from the normal progression of labor; included may be the performance of a vaginal examination. In the case of a laboring obstetrical patient, under the direct supervision of a RN or

licensed practitioner, LPNs may participate in assessment of the laboring patient through the collection of data by observation and examination.

LPNs are accountable to immediately report to the directing RN or licensed practitioner any deviations from normal for the laboring patient. The RN or licensed practitioner directing the LPN is accountable to determine that the laboring obstetrical patient status is predictable and therefore, participation by the LPN in the nursing care is an appropriate assignment.

The decision by an LPN to participate in the care of a laboring patient should be based upon self-assessment of competency, and following assessment of the client and environment. A licensed nurse is accountable to be competent for all nursing care that he/she provides. Competence means the ability of the nurse to apply interpersonal, technical and decision-making skills at the level of knowledge consistent with the prevailing standard for the nursing activity being applied. Accountability also includes acknowledgment of personal limitations in knowledge and skills, and communicating the need for specialized instruction prior to providing any nursing activity.