



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

South Carolina Board of Nursing

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ADVISORY OPINION # 31

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REVISED: November 2014, March 2011, July 2007, May 2003, March 2001, December 1997

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QUESTION: May the registered nurse (RN) administer red blood cells and platelets in the home setting?

The State Board of Nursing for South Carolina acknowledges that it is within the role and scope of practice of the RN to administer red blood cells and platelets in the home setting, providing there is written patient specific medical orders which include steps to take in the event of a reaction the environment is supportive to emergency medical care and there is a responsible caregiver available who can assist the nurse in the event of an adverse reaction.

The Board recommends that

- The first blood transfusion not be given in the home due to the risk, though rare, of an anaphylactic reaction.
- The patient recently be evaluated by his or her physician, have a stable cardiopulmonary status and have acceptable venous access.
- Medical orders stipulate the component type, number of units, the flow rate, concurrent fluids to be administered, any necessary pre-medications, laboratory tests to be obtained before and after transfusion and actions to take in the event of transfusion reactions.

The Board also recommends that the agency develop written policies and procedures which specify:

- Patient situations whereby the RN is authorized to administer red blood cells/platelets in the home setting,
- How it will assure positive identification of both the patient and the blood component,
- Procedures for safe storage, transportation and disposal, and
- How it will assure that the RN is competent and knowledgeable of safety parameters to be monitored and reported.

This statement is an advisory opinion of the Board of Nursing as to what constitutes competent and safe nursing practice.