



South Carolina
Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



Board of Nursing

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ADVISORY OPINION # 72

FORMULATED: March 2021

QUESTION: Is it within the scope of practice of a licensed APRN, RN, or LPN to perform micropigmentation, also known as microblading?

The Board of Nursing for South Carolina acknowledges that it is NOT within the scope of practice of a licensed nurse to perform micropigmentation or microblading unless the nurse is an employee of a licensed physician, the physician has delegated the task to the nurse, and the physician remains onsite to supervise the nurse. The physician must determine that the person to whom the task has been delegated has the training, experience, and education to perform the procedure.

Permanent cosmetics and micropigmentation involves the placement of color in facial tissues for the purposes of cosmetic enhancement, medical correction, and/or aesthetic restoration. Because micropigmentation involves the structural alteration of facial tissue, this procedure requires specialized training and can only be performed under the direction of a physician. The Board recognizes that permanent cosmetics, cosmetic tattooing, and micropigmentation of the facial tissues is a separate specialty which is outside scope of tattooing in this state. See South Carolina Code Ann. § 44-34-100(E) (stating it is unlawful to tattoo any part of the head, face, or neck of another person).

As set forth in South Carolina Code Section § 16-17-700, "[i]t is not unlawful for a licensed physician or surgeon to tattoo part of the body of a person of any age if in the physician's or of the surgeon's medical opinion it is necessary or appropriate; and it is not unlawful for a physician to delegate tattooing procedures to an employee in accordance with Section 40-47-60,¹ subject to the regulations of the Board of Medical Examiners."

As noted by the BME, a physician must direct the course of the patient's treatment, must directly supervise the person performing the procedure, and must be on site when the procedure is performed, so as to be immediately available in order to provide appropriate care as needed under the circumstances.²

¹ South Carolina Code § 40-47-60 is now § 40-47-30(5), but the substance of this section has not changed.

² This Advisory Opinion is consistent with the opinion of the Board of Medical Examiners, which can be found at <https://llr.sc.gov/med/Policies/Micropigmentation%20policy-final.aspx>