



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

South Carolina Board of Nursing

110 Centerview Dr. • Columbia • SC • 29210

P.O. Box 12367 • Columbia • SC 29211-2367

Phone: 803-896-4550 • NURSEBOARD@llr.sc.gov • Fax: 803-896-4515

llr.sc.gov/nurse

**PRACTICING AT LEVEL OTHER THAN HIGHEST
LICENSURE/APPROVAL/RECOGNITION
POSITION STATEMENT
For RN, LPN, and APRN Practice
Formulated: November, 2019**

A Position Statement does not carry the force and effect of law and rules but is adopted by the Board as a means of providing direction to licensees who seek to engage in safe nursing practice. Board Position Statements address issues of concern to the Board relevant to protection of the public and are reviewed regularly for relevance and accuracy to current practice, and the Nurse Practice act.

Issue:

Licensed nurses are sometimes employed in positions having qualifications and responsibilities below the level of the nurses' highest level of licensure/approval/recognition.

This Position Statement applies, but is not limited to, licensed nurses employed in the following situations:

- Registered Nurse (RN) working as Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) or Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP)
- LPN working as UAP
- Advance Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) [Nurse Practitioner, Certified Nurse Midwife, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, or Clinical Nurse Specialist] working as an RN, LPN, or UAP
- Student nurse working as UAP and successfully completes licensure exam

RN, LPN, and APRN Responsibility and Accountability: Licensed nurses are held responsible and accountable for practicing at all times within the scope associated with their highest level of active licensure.

Regardless of employment role, title, status, or position description, licensed nurses are responsible and accountable for the components of practice specified in the Nursing Practice Act at the level at which they are licensed. APRNs working in the role of an RN must stay within the scope of an RN. In the case of an emergency the APRN can follow the organization's procedures but only in the role of an RN.

Employers, nurse leaders, and others can restrict or limit specific practice activities or tasks but cannot expand legal scope of practice and cannot alter or eliminate legally-determined components or standards of practice. Nurses should give careful consideration to the challenges and potential complexities of accepting employment at a level other than their highest level of active licensure/approval/recognition. Role and scope of practice confusion may result when performing duties within a designated position description while still being held responsible and accountable for practicing within the full scope of highest level of active licensure/approval/recognition.

Student nurses working as UAP and have successfully completed the licensure exam may continue working as UAP for a maximum of ninety (90) days.

SECTION 40-33-33. Inactive status of certain licenses.

(A) When a licensed practical nurse becomes licensed as a registered nurse, the person's LPN license must be placed on inactive status.

(B) When a registered nurse becomes licensed as an advanced practice registered nurse, the person's RN license must be placed on inactive status. However, an APRN is authorized to practice as a RN while the person's APRN license is in good standing, unless otherwise specifically authorized by the board.

HISTORY: 2004 Act No. 225, Section 1.