# Protecting Your Scope of Practice

The scope of nursing practice is a factor that defines, where, who, what, when, how and why nursing practice will be carried out for registered nurses and the advanced practice registered nurses. This aligns with the fact that nursing is a profession in which its members are responsible toward the public and this makes it crucial to identify their scope of practice and the standards that align with the same. This implies that the foundational work is put to pace and there is room for description and refinement through other entities that are involved in expounding on the scope of practice. Per se, the scope of practice is described by a collaboration effort between the American Nurses Association (ANA) and other nursing organizations such as those that deal with specialty. For instance, in Pediatric Nursing the scope of practice is defined by the collaboration between ANA, the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) and the Society for Pediatric Nurses (SPN). Moreover, the scope of nursing practice especially for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) as defined by ANA aligns with the Constituent Member (State) Associations, in which states enact their own scope and standards of practice that are in line with the specifications provided by ANA (Nursing World, 2017).

The Nurse Practice Act defines the APRN practice, which is governed by the Board of Nursing (BON) in a state as is the case in Florida. In Florida, BON seeks to protect the welfare and health of the public and it does this by overseeing the nursing practice (Florida Board of Nursing, 2016). The oversight is enhanced by the laws and regulations that the state adopts, which align with nursing practice and the intent is to ensure that nurses, especially APRN who have advanced variations understand the way in which their scope of practice is defined in the laws and regulations that the state adopts. The same applies for the opinions that are promulgated by other state regulatory agencies. The Florida Nurse Practice Act, section 464.003 of the Florida Statutes defines the scope of nursing practice in the state (George, 2008). This is done through the definition of what nursing entails followed by an explanation of what each category of nursing practice entails; that is, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, APRN and medical assistants. In the case of APRN, one is defined as a nurse with an advanced education level and one that practice professional nursing based on the specialized education, experience and the certification by the BON (NCSBN, 2016). These factors allow the APRN to perform his nursing duties on an advanced-level, including diagnosis, treatment, prescription and operation.

For instance, the scope of practice of a clinical nurse specialist who is a good example of an APRN is defined in section 464.003(6). The Florida Nurse Practice Act as an individual licensed by the state to perform professional nursing and one that has received certification in the clinical nurse specialist practice (Rn.com, 2016). In the state, the certification for clinical nurse specialist includes the certified nurse midwives (CNM), the certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs); the certified nurse practitioners (CNPs) and the advanced practice nurse (APN).The state of Florida thereby defines the scope of practice for APRN as one that offers direct patient care, serves as an expert consultant for the other nursing staffs and individuals ready and willing to take an active hand in enhancing the health care delivery systems in the state (NCSBN, 2016).

However, there are some limits for APRNs in Florida, which is not the case in other states. Firstly, being unaware of the licensure requirements within one’s profession are not ground that can alleviate an individual from accountability of practicing responsibly. APRNs are expected to prescribe controlled substances that are listed in Schedule II, III, or IV, defined in section 893.03 Florida Statutes. The regulations are that even though an APRN has graduated with a master’s or a doctoral degree in a nursing specialty and has also acquired specialized practitioner skills; he is still required to complete at least 3 hours of continuing education on effective and safe prescribing of the listed controlled substances. Further APRNs are required to designate themselves as individuals that are qualified to prescribe for treatment such as chronic non-malignant pain. However, even as controlled substances prescribers, the APRNs must meet the stipulated standards of practice as those of the physicians. The new law, which took effect on January 2017 demands that APRNs have a seven-day supply limit and this does not include the prescribing of the children under 18 years psychotropic medications, especially if the APRN is not a Psychiatric Nurse. Even though the controlled substances prescription took effect in January 2017, because previously APRNs were not allowed to do the same, there are still limitations applied that hinder APRNs from fully carrying out their duties (Florida Nursing, 2017). Nevertheless, the positive thing about these limitations is that they require an APRN to continually enhance his level of education, meaning that the state is committed to providing the best health care services and it is taking the necessary measures that will help prevent medical errors. With this, I believe the nursing scope initiative in Florida will have a positive impact in my future career as a qualified APRN because it seeks to ensure that the best health care services are provided.

# References

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