



Arizona State Board of Nursing

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An advisory opinion adopted by AZBN is an interpretation of what the law requires. While an advisory opinion is not law, it is more than a recommendation. In other words, an advisory opinion is an official opinion of AZBN regarding the practice of nursing as it relates to the functions of nursing. Facility policies may restrict practice further in their setting and/or require additional expectations related to competency, validation, training, and supervision to assure the safety of their patient population and/or decrease risk.

**OPINION: REGISTERED NURSE
FIRST ASSISTANT**
APPROVED: 10/87
REVISED DATE: 1/02, 7/04, 7/07, 3/11
ORIGINATING COMMITTEE:

Within the Scope of Practice of X RN LPN

ADVISORY OPINION REGISTERED NURSE FIRST ASSISTANT – RNFA

It is within the scope of practice of a Registered Nurse who can demonstrate the necessary education, knowledge, judgment, certification, and skills, to practice as a RNFA, assisting the surgeon during surgical procedures. The RNFA is not authorized to independently perform a surgical procedure which is the primary purpose of the surgery, or to perform organ transplants.

The Board of Nursing endorses the March 2010 AORN official statement on RNFAs

I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. The RNFA will comply with the policies as delineated by the employer/facility and meet the requirements of the credentialing review committee (if any).
- B. The RNFA will assist the surgeon in the performance of a surgical procedure and shall function as an RNFA only when the surgeon is immediately available in the practice setting during the entire course of the operative procedure.

II. Qualifications:

The minimum qualifications to practice as an RNFA are:

- A. Certification as a Certified Nurse of the Operation Room (CNOR)
- B. Successful completion of an approved RNFA program that meets the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN, 2010) RNFA criteria
- C. Compliance with all statutes, regulations, and institutional policies related to the role of the RNFA (AORN, 2010).¹

Role of the RNFA within the intra-operative functions includes but is not limited to (AORN, 2010):

1. Preoperative patient management in collaboration with other health care providers, such as:
 - a. Performing focused preoperative nursing assessments,
 - b. Communicating and collaborating with other health care providers regarding the surgical patient plan of care
2. Intraoperative performance of RNFA techniques as in:
 - a. Using surgical instruments and medical devices
 - b. Providing surgical site exposure,
 - c. Handling and/or cutting tissue,
 - d. Providing hemostasis,

- e. Suturing
- 3. Postoperative patient management in collaboration with other health care providers in the immediate postoperative period and beyond, such as:
 - a. Participating in postoperative rounds
 - b. Assisting with patient discharge planning and identifying appropriate community resources as needed.

III. RATIONALE

The Board of Nursing recognizes the role of the RNFA as being within the scope of practice of an RN and endorses the March 2010 AORN position statement on RN First Assistants.

IV. REFERENCES

Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN, 2010) Perioperative Standards and Recommended Practice pgs. 743-746 Denver, CO.

¹ www.aorn.org/PracticeResources/AORNPositionStatements/Position_RNFA