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OPINION: WOUND CARE: ROLE OF LPN
APPROVED:
DATE: 1/11
REVISED DATE:
ORIGINATING COMMITTEE:
SCOPE OF PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Within the Scope of Practice of: ___ RN X LPN

ADVISORY OPINION **Wound Care: Role of the LPN**

It is within the Scope of Practice of a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to contribute to the initial assessment of wounds through the gathering and recording of assessment data and to perform basic and advanced wound care in collaboration with the RN or Licensed Independent Practitioner (LIP) on an ongoing basis, if the following requirements are met:

I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. An RN or LIP is responsible for the assessment of the patient and develops the initial and ongoing plan of treatment performed by the LPN.
- B. The LPN functions under the supervision of and in collaboration with a RN or LIP.
- C. Written policies and procedures are maintained by the employer/agency.
- D. LPNs who can show documentation of satisfactory completion of a clinical instructional program and can demonstrate competencies are allowed to perform basic and advanced wound care and sharp wound debridement.

DEFINITIONS

1. *Basic Wound Care* is defined as care that protects the wound, keeps the wound clean, moist, and well-nourished and keeps pressure off the wound.
2. *Advanced Wound Care* is defined as care of complex wounds including but not limited to open wounds with depth that require packing, ostomies or radiation burns. Specialized training, e.g. classes, inservices or other continuing education offerings, related to wound care, wound care products and devices are required to perform advanced wound care.
3. *Sharp Wound Debridement* is defined as the removal of loose avascular tissue without pain or bleeding.

II. COURSE OF INSTRUCTION

BASIC

- A. Understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the integumentary system
- B. Understanding of wound physiology and wound healing principles

- C. Inspection and evaluation of wound site, including wound measurement
- D. Application of basic wound care products, including but not limited to gauze or hydrocolloid dressings.
- E. Monitoring and documentation of wound treatment
- F. Communicating indications of change in the client's status and reporting of findings to an RN or LIP.

ADVANCED

- A. Staging and treatment of complex wounds
- B. Selection and application of specialty wound care products including, but not limited to maggot therapy alginate wound care products.
- C. Management of medical/clinical devices associated with wound care, e.g. negative pressure therapy.

SHARP WOUND DEBRIDEMENT

- A. Completion of a nationally recognized course and documented certification for performing sharp wound debridement.

III. RATIONALE

An LPN with appropriate education can provide wound care as delegated by an RN and/or LIP and modify the plan of care in collaboration with an RN and/or LIP based on the identification and communication of changes in the client's status.

IV. REFERENCES

Alabama Board of Nursing; Standards for wound assessment and care; www.abn.state.al.us/

Arizona Nurse Practice Act: R4-19-401

Colorado Board of Nursing; Scope of practice for the Licensed Practical Nurse.
www.dora.state.co.us/Nursing/scope/scope.htm#RN

North Carolina Board of Nursing. Wound care: Assessment and Debridement, May 2009.
www.ncbon.com/content.aspx?id=682

Oklahoma Board of Nursing, Wound debridement by licensed nurses guideline, November 2008. www.ok.gov/nursing/prac-wndbrd.pdf

Position statement and related core competencies: Staff Nurse-Licensed Practical Nurse, American Association for Long Term Care Nurses.

Schaefer, N. (2009). Accessing the initials: Does certification in wound care make a difference? Advance for LPNs 6(12), 16-18.