



Arizona State Board of Nursing

4747 North 7th Street, Suite 200
Phoenix, AZ 85014-3655
Phone (602) 771-7800 Fax (602) 771-7888
E-Mail: arizona@azbn.gov
Home Page: <http://www.azbn.gov>

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: SUPERVISION OF UNLICENSED NURSE
EXTERNS BY PROFESSIONAL NURSES**
APPROVED DATE: 3/93
REVISED DATE: 10/96, 2/01; 12/02, 3/03, 3/06, 1/09
ORIGINATING COMMITTEE:
EDUCATION LICENSURE COMMITTEE

ADVISORY OPINION SUPERVISION OF UNLICENSED NURSE EXTERNS BY REGISTERED NURSES

STATEMENT OF SCOPE

It is within the scope of the Registered Nurse to supervise unlicensed Nurse Externs. It is within the scope of unlicensed Nurse Externs to perform nursing skills for which they have received didactic and clinical instruction in their accredited, State Board of Nursing approved, professional Registered Nursing program. It is NOT within the scope of unlicensed Nurse Externs to perform regulated nursing functions such as administering medications.

I. DEFINITION

An unlicensed Nurse Extern:

- A. Is a nursing student or graduate of a Registered Nursing (RN) program
- B. Provides nursing care to clients as an employee of a healthcare facility with the job title of Nurse Extern.
- C. Is working under the direct supervision of a Registered Nurse (RN)
- D. The care provided by an unlicensed Nurse Extern includes basic data collection and documentation of client progress in the medical record; observing, performing and documenting approved nursing procedures in the medical record including administration of oxygen, attending to clients' comfort needs and performing specific duties related to the assigned nursing unit as delegated by the RN and within the approved policies of the facility in which they are employed.
- E. If the unlicensed Nurse Extern has other educational training or background such as but not limited to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), they can only function within their scope in which they are employed as an unlicensed Nurse Extern and cannot perform skills or duties specific to other background or training. (Refer to advisory opinion on Dual Profession & Dual Health Care Licensure/Certification).

II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. An RN may directly supervise an unlicensed Nurse Extern employed by a facility, only if the unlicensed Nurse Extern is currently enrolled in or a graduate of an accredited professional nursing program approved by the State Board of Nursing.
- B. The unlicensed Nurse Extern must show proof of having completed didactic instruction with clinical validation in fundamental nursing skills and satisfactory completion of at least one semester in the professional nursing program.

- C. The unlicensed Nurse Extern must have received didactic and clinical instruction in IV therapy to participate in aspects of IV therapy. Unlicensed Nurse Externs may participate in the provision of the following aspects of IV therapy including peripheral-short* IV insertion with the use of saline flushes, changing IV dressings and the discontinuation of peripheral-short IVs under the direct observation and supervision of an RN.
- D. Unlicensed Nurse Externs may NOT administer parenteral fluids, IV medications or blood products, saline flushes for patency after initial starts, adjust rates or pump devices.
- E. Unlicensed Nurse Externs may NOT administer medications except oxygen & saline flushes for the purpose of insertion of IVs.
- F. The unlicensed Nurse Extern, under the direct supervision of an RN, may perform other nursing skills for which they have received didactic and clinical instruction in their program including oxygen therapy.
- G. Skills including the specific aspects of IV therapy as stated in II.C. (and oxygen therapy) must be validated and documented in accordance with the facility policy.

RATIONALE:

To provide guidelines for the supervision of unlicensed nurse externs. The purpose of the externship is to enhance education and to facilitate the transition into the RN role.

REFERENCES:

Starr, K. & Conley, V. (2006). Becoming a registered nurse: The nurse extern experience. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*. 37(2), 86-92.

Arizona Nurse Practice Act, Article 2. "Arizona Professional and Practical Nursing Program", R 4-19-206.

Infusion Nursing Standards of Practice, *Journal of Infusion Nursing*. January/February 2006, Volume 29, Number S1, Revised 2006.

*Definition of a peripheral-short catheter: According to the Infusion Nursing Standards of Practice (Jan-Feb 2006), a peripheral-short is one that is less than or equal to 3 inches (7.5 cm) in length.