



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: SIGMOIDOSCOPY
FLEXIBLE SCREENING
APPROVED: 1/90
DATE: 1/90
REVISED DATE: 3/95; 11/02, 3/06
7/13
ORIGINATING COMMITTEE:
SCOPE OF PRACTICE COMMITTEE**

Within the Scope of Practice of X RN LPN

ADVISORY OPINION

FLEXIBLE SIGMOIDOSCOPY FOR: SCREENING PURPOSES

It is within the scope of practice of a Registered Nurse to perform flexible sigmoidoscopy for screening purposes, not diagnostic, if the following requirements are met:

DEFINITION

Flexible sigmoidoscopy refers to the examination of the mucosal lining of the rectum, sigmoid colon and may include examinations of a portion of the descending colon

I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. A written policy and procedures are maintained by the employer.
- B. Only Registered Nurses who have satisfactorily completed an agency's instructional program and have had supervised clinical practice are allowed to perform flexible sigmoidoscopy for screening purposes and obtain biopsy specimens.
- C. Documentation of satisfactory completion of the instruction and supervised practice is on file with the agency/employer.
- D. Didactic education and competencies for obtaining biopsy specimens are completed and on file with the agency/employer

II. COURSE OF INSTRUCTION is to Include but not be limited to:

- A. Anatomy, physiology and pathology of the colon and abdomen
- B. Indications and contraindications to the procedure.
- C. Potential adverse reactions.
- D. Manipulation of the sigmoidoscope.
- E. Technique for obtaining biopsy specimens
- F. Distinguishing between normal and abnormal findings and referring to appropriate physician.
- G. Nursing care responsibilities.

III. ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. The society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates (SGNA) recommends that registered nurses performing endoscopy hold current certification from the American Board of Certification for Gastroenterology Nurses (ABCGN)
- b. SGNA recommends that a minimum of 50 flexible sigmoidoscopies be performed under the supervision of a skilled physician endoscopist before a registered nurse can perform this procedure independently.
- c. SGNA recommends that registered nurses performing flexible sigmoidoscopy participate in quarterly monitoring of exam by a gastroenterologist 3 – 5 times per quarter or as outlined by employer/agency policy. Document continuing education and competency at least annually as outlined by employer/agency policy.

IV. RATIONALE

Safety and accuracy of the routine flexible sigmoidoscopy screening and retrieval of biopsy specimens by registered nurses is supported in current research and practice publications.

V. REFERENCES

American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy guideline (2009). Endoscopy by non-physicians. *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy* 69(4). 767-770

Els M. L. Verschuur, Ernst J. Kuipers, Peter D. Siersema. (2007). Nurses working in GI and endoscopic practice: a review. *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy* 65 (3), 469-479.

Guideline for performance of flexible sigmoidoscopy by registered nurses for the purpose of colorectal cancer screening. Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates. (2009) <http://www.sgna.org/Portals/0/Education/Practice%20GuidelinesFlexiblesSimoidoscopyGuideline.pdf>

Other state boards with advisory opinions/position statements/decision tree that support this advisory opinion:

Alaska board of nursing (June 2001)

California board of nursing

Iowa board of nursing (1996)

Montana board of nursing (2008)

New Mexico board of nursing

North Carolina board of nursing (1997)

North Dakota board of nursing (2008)

*list not complete yet