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An advisory opinion adopted by AZBN is an interpretation of what the law requires. Arizona Revised Statutes § 32-1606(A)(2). 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: ROLE OF THE ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE IN THE PRESCRIBING OF MEDICATIONS TO SELF AND/OR FAMILY
APPROVED DATE: 03/27/2015
REVISED DATE: xx/xx
ORIGINATING COMMITTEE:
Advanced Practice Committee

Within the Scope of Practice of ___ RN ___ LPN X APRN

ADVISORY OPINION

ROLE OF THE ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE: TREATING AND PRESCRIBING OF MEDICATIONS TO SELF AND/OR FAMILY

PURPOSE:

The Advisory Opinion Statement was developed to clarify the standard of care for the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) regarding personal relationships with potential patients. APRNs often find themselves in situations in which they may feel compelled to provide medical aspects of care, including prescribing medications, to themselves, their family members, or other individuals with whom they have a close personal relationship. The standard of care requires, absent an emergency or under limited circumstances, the APRN to treat only those patients for whom the APRN has and maintains clinical objectivity. Treating an individual, or one's self, where there exists a personal (non-professional) relationship may jeopardize the APRN's ability to maintain clinical objectivity and may prevent the patient from developing a therapeutic relationship with his or her own, independent healthcare provider, or may interfere with the treatment plan developed by the patient's established healthcare provider.

ADVISORY OPINION:

Legend or Non-Scheduled Pharmaceuticals, Diagnostics and Therapies:

The standard of practice requires that APRNs avoid treating themselves, family, or any other individuals with whom the nurse has a relationship that affects the nurse's ability to use independent, objective, and sound nursing judgment when prescribing, except when the nurse is engaging in one or more of the following:

- Treating minor, self-limiting conditions.
- Providing care in an emergency medical situation in which immediate medical care is required for the preservation or health, life, or limb; and only when another qualified healthcare professional is not readily available.

When an APRN does provide care to self, family, or other individuals with whom the nurse has a relationship that may interfere with or affect the nurse's ability to use independent, objective, and sound clinical judgment, it is the APRN's responsibility to inform the patient's established healthcare provider of the treatment provided, when appropriate.

Controlled Substances:

It is a violation of the Nurse Practice Act to prescribe controlled substances to one's self or family.

DEFINITIONS:

- "Family" means individuals who are related by blood, marriage, cohabitation, and adoption including self, direct ancestors and descendants, any parent, sibling, child, grandparent, grandchild, spouse, sibling of a parent and children of a sibling, domestic partners, significant others, or persons sharing a residence including in a guardian or other supervisory relationship.
- "Treating" or "Treatment"- includes ordering and performing tests, making and communicating a diagnosis, and prescribing medications.
- "Minor Condition"- is a non-urgent, non-serious condition that requires short-term care of a routine nature. The condition is not likely to lead to a more serious condition and does not require on-going monitoring.
- "Emergency medical situation" - a manifestation in which an individual is suffering or is at risk of sustaining serious bodily harm if medical intervention is not provided promptly.

APPLICABLE STATUTES AND RULES include:

Arizona Revised Statutes:

§§ 32-1601(22)(d) and (j):

- (d) Any conduct or practice that is or might be harmful or dangerous to the health of a patient or the public.
- (j) Violating a rule that is adopted by the Board pursuant to this chapter.

Arizona Administrative Code:

For purposes of A.R.S. § 32-1601(22), (d), any conduct or practice that is or might be harmful or dangerous to the health of a patient or the public includes one or more of the following:

- **Rule 4-19-403(1):** A pattern of failure to maintain minimum standards of acceptable and prevailing nursing practice;
- **Rule 4-19-403(3):** Failing to maintain professional boundaries or engaging in a dual relationship with a patient, resident, or any family member of a patient or resident;
- **Rule 4-19-403(31):** Practicing in any other manner that gives the Board reasonable cause to believe the health of a patient or the public may be harmed.

Rule 4-19-508. Standards Related to Registered Nurse Practitioner ("RNP") Scope of Practice

C. A RNP shall only provide health care services including prescribing and dispensing within the RNP's population focus and role and for which the RNP is educationally prepared and for which competency has been established and maintained. Educational preparation means academic coursework or continuing education activities that include both theory and supervised clinical practice.

Rule 4-19-511. Prescribing and Dispensing Authority; Prohibited Acts

- D. In addition to acts listed under R4-19-403, for a nurse who prescribes or dispenses a drug or device, a practice that is or might be harmful to the health of a patient or the public, includes one or more of the following:
1. Prescribing a controlled substance to oneself or a member of the nurse's family

REFERENCES

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