



Interpretive Guideline

Title: Registered Nurse Performance of A Patient Health History And Physical Examination For Purposes of Providing Nursing Care

The scope of practice for a registered nurse includes assessing health status for purposes of providing nursing care. The assessment may include the collection of a patient's health history and the performance of a physical examination when the purpose of the history and physical examination is to assess the health status of an individual for the purpose of providing nursing care (Section 4723.01(B), Ohio Revised Code (ORC)).

A. A registered nurse with the necessary knowledge, skills, and ability may collect information pertaining to a patient's health history and perform a physical examination that includes but is not limited to the following:

- Interviewing the patient and others as applicable to obtain the patient's health history;
- Performing a physical examination of the patient in a systematic manner;
- Directing an LPN as applicable to collect data in accordance with the LPN's responsibilities contained in Rule 4723-4-08, Ohio Administrative Code (OAC).
- Documenting the health history and the source of the information;
- Documenting the physical examination findings;
- Organizing and interpreting the health history and examination findings for purposes of providing nursing care;
- Establishing nursing diagnoses resulting from the findings;
- Executing a prepared nursing regimen and plan of care resulting from the established nursing diagnoses; and
- Providing health counseling and health teaching appropriate for the nursing diagnoses and examination findings

B. When performing a history and physical examination a registered nurse should timely report to and consult with other nurses or with other members of the health care team, and make referrals as necessary (Rule 4723-4-03(G), OAC).

C. A registered nurse, who is not an advanced practice registered nurse, in collecting a patient's history and performing a physical examination shall not form a medical diagnosis or develop a medical regimen as this is the practice of medicine and surgery and is prohibited (Section 4723.151, ORC).

Considerations in Performing a History and Physical Examination (Rule 4723-4-03, OAC)

1. The registered nurse performing a history and physical examination should maintain documentation of his/her acquisition of education and demonstrated competency, and other documentation required to ensure that practice is in compliance with written employer/institutional policies and procedures.
2. The registered nurse's education/training and demonstrated competence should include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Anatomy and physiology
 - b. Physical examination skills and techniques
 - c. Pharmacology
 - d. Interview techniques

Accountability and Responsibility of Registered Nurses

Section 4723.01(B), ORC, defines the scope of practice for the registered nurse. Rule 4723-4-03, OAC, holds registered nurses responsible for maintaining and demonstrating current knowledge, skills, abilities, and competence in rendering nursing care within their scope of practice.

The registered nurse must apply the Nurse Practice Act (Chapter 4723, ORC) and rules regulating the practice of nursing (Chapters 4723-1 to 4723-27, OAC) to the specific practice setting. Further, the registered nurse must utilize good professional judgment in determining whether or not to engage in a given patient-care related activity, consistent with the law, rules, and guided by the Board's Decision-Making Model. It is critical to note that the law and rules require that the licensee provide nursing care only in circumstances that are consistent with their education, experience, knowledge, and demonstrated competency.

In this statement the Board does not announce a new policy but instead gives licensees specific instructions regarding their obligations under existing law and rules.

Licensees should review the following:

- Section 4723.01(B), ORC
- Rule 4723-4-03, OAC
- Rule 4723-4-06, OAC
- Rule 4723-4-07, OAC

The Nurse Practice Act and administrative rules are available for review and download from the Board website: www.nursing.ohio.gov in the Law and Rules section.

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