



Ohio Board of Nursing

www.nursing.ohio.gov

17 S. High Street, Suite 660 • Columbus, Ohio 43215-3466 • 614-466-3947

RN and LPN Nursing Practice in the COVID-19 Health Care Environment **March 30, 2020**

Nurses are vital for patient care and safeguarding public health during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Nurses will likely be reassigned to unfamiliar clinical areas, types of patients or conditions, and/or equipment.

This document is to provide guidance about the standards of practice for RNs and LPNs. Standards are established by the Nurse Practice Act (Chapter 4723. ORC) and in administrative rules: Standard of Practice Relative to Registered Nurse and Licensed Practical Nurse (Chapter 4723-4, OAC); Delegation of Nursing Tasks (Chapter 4723-13, OAC); and Prevention of Disease Transmission (Chapter 4723-20, OAC).

The standards of practice in Chapter 4723-4, OAC, are broadly written and apply to all nursing practice, regardless of the nurse's area of specialization, the patient's condition or illness, the type of facility, or location of the patient.

Telecommunications; Audiovisual Equipment; and Telehealth: Nurses may use any type of telecommunication equipment to examine and assess patients; provide patients and family health teaching and health counseling (by the RN); patient teaching (by the LPN); and convey information to authorized health care providers and other members of the health care team. In providing telehealth, nurses practice in the same manner as they would if physically present with the patient, including ensuring patient privacy, confidentiality, and documenting the nursing care provided and the patient's response.

Delegation of Nursing Tasks: In general, nurses are authorized to delegate a nursing task to an unlicensed person or teams of unlicensed persons, provided the task is not prohibited (such as unauthorized medication administration), the nurse has obtained verification that the unlicensed person is educated and competent in the safe performance of the task, and the task does not require complex observations or critical decisions to be made during the performance of the task. Nurses may delegate to persons who have existing authority to administer medications, including MA-Cs certified by the Board of Nursing or medication aides certified by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. RNs and LPNs may not delegate to an unlicensed person, the administration of medications with the exception of over the counter topical medications applied to intact skin, over the counter eye drop, ear drops, suppository medications, foot soak treatments, and enemas.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When caring for patients who have or are presumed to have COVID-19, be familiar with the disease and use universal precautions. A reliable resource for COVID-19 information is the Ohio Department of Health hotline, 1-833-4-ASK-ODH and [Coronavirus.Ohio.Gov](https://www.ohio.gov/coronavirus).

On March 27, 2020, Governor DeWine made an urgent plea to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to issue an emergency waiver for the use of new technology that could sterilize up to 160,000 used personal protective face masks per day in Ohio. Due to the urgent need for PPE in Ohio, Governor DeWine once again asked that anyone who has unneeded PPE or can manufacture new PPE to email the state at together@governor.ohio.gov. Included below is a joint letter from ODH and the Ohio Hospital Association regarding PPE.