



Medication Aide Fact Sheet – June 2007

Delegation

*Note: Unless otherwise specified, facts are from the National Council of the State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN). The NCSBN is a not-for-profit organization whose membership comprises the boards of nursing in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the four United States territories. The purpose of NCSBN is to provide an organization through which boards of nursing act and counsel together on matters of common interest and concern affecting the public health, safety and welfare, including the development of licensing examinations in nursing. NCSBN's programs and services also include performing policy analysis and promoting uniformity in relationship to the regulation of nursing practice, disseminating data related to the licensure of nurses, **conducting research pertinent to NCSBN's purpose**, and serving as a forum for information exchange for members. The NCSBN provides leadership to advance regulatory excellence for public protection. Their value statement includes: **Integrity - Doing the right thing for the right reason through informed, open and ethical debate.***

- 1.) There is a need and a place for competent, appropriately supervised nursing assistive personnel in the delivery of affordable, quality health care.
- 2.) To delegate is to transfer authority to a competent individual for completing selected tasks/activities/functions.
- 3.) The steps of the delegation process include:
 - Assessment of the client, the staff and the context of the situation;
 - Communication to provide direction and opportunity for interaction during the completion of the delegated task;
 - Surveillance and monitoring to assure compliance with standards of practice, policies and procedures;
 - Evaluation to consider the effectiveness of the delegation and whether the desired client outcome was attained.
- 4.) Delegation is a skill requiring clinical judgment and final accountability for client care.
- 5.) There is both individual accountability and organizational accountability for delegation. Organizational accountability relates to providing sufficient resources, staffing, appropriate staff mix, implementation of policies and role descriptions, opportunity for continuing staff development and creating an environment conducive to teamwork, collaboration and client-centered care.
- 6.) Nursing is an outcome-driven, knowledge-based, process discipline that is context dependent and requires critical thinking. Nursing cannot be reduced solely to a list of tasks. The licensed nurse's specialized education, professional education, professional judgment and discretion are essential for quality health care.

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- 7.) The practice pervasive functions of assessment, planning, evaluation and nursing judgment cannot be delegated.
- 8.) Delegation presumes the delegator has greater knowledge and a delegated task is only a subcomponent of a larger whole. (Arizona Nurses Association)
- 9.) Globalization of market forces and evolving health care reform provide opportunity to analyze nurses' traditional roles and assume responsibility for judicious delegation of nursing tasks to UAP. (Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses)
- 10.) The topic of delegation had never been timelier. Delegation is a process that, used appropriately, can result in safe and effective nursing care. Delegation can free the nurse for attending more complex patient care needs, develop the skills of nursing assistive personnel and promote cost containment for the healthcare organization....Facing a shortage of epic proportions, the nursing community needs to plan how we can continue to accomplish nursing care while assuring the public access to safe, competent nursing care. RNs are urged to seek guidance and appropriate direction from supervisors or mentors when considering decisions about delegation. Mastering the skill and art of delegation is a critical step on the pathway to nursing excellence. (Joint Statement on Delegation ANA and NCSBN)
- 11.) Major findings in the 1998 Washington state Nurse Delegation Study included:
 - Consumers prefer the least restrictive setting possibility and value the ability to age in place.
 - There was no evidence of significant harm or adverse outcomes for consumers nurse delegation during the study period.
 - RN involvement in care planning has increased, communication has improved among the care team and with families and residents, and nursing assistants are better prepared to provide care under nurse delegation.
 - Nurse delegation has brought unlicensed practice under the supervision of RNs. Rather than bring higher risk tasks into the settings, Nurse Delegation has actually enhanced the quality and intensity of supervision.
 - RNs exhibit professional judgment and discretion in determining what and to whom to delegate.