

# NURSING PRACTICE STANDARDS for the LICENSED PRACTICAL/VOCATIONAL NURSE



*“Nursing Practice Standards”* is one of the ways that NALPN meets the objective of its bylaws to address principles and ethics and also to meet another Article II objective, “To interpret the standards of practical (vocational) nursing.”

In recent years, LPNs and LVNs have practiced in a changing environment. As LPNs and LVNs practice in expanding roles in the health care system, “Nursing Practice Standards” is essential reading for LPNs, LVNs, PN and VN students and their educators, and all who practice with LPNs and LVNs.

## NURSING PRACTICE STANDARDS for the LICENSED PRACTICAL/ VOCATIONAL NURSE

### PREFACE

The Standards were developed and adopted by NALPN to provide a basic model whereby the quality of health service and nursing service and nursing care given by LP/VNs may be measured and evaluated.

These nursing practice standards are applicable in any practice setting. The degree to which individual standards are applied will vary according to the individual needs of the patient, the type of health care agency or services and the community resources.

The scope of licensed practical nursing has extended into specialized nursing services. Therefore, specialized fields of nursing are included in this document.

### THE CODE FOR LICENSE PRACTICAL/VOCATIONAL NURSES

The Code, adopted by NFLPN (now NALPN) in 1961 and revised in 1979, provides a motivation for establishing, maintaining and elevating professional standards. Each LP/VN, upon entering the profession, inherits the responsibility to adhere to the standards of ethical practice and conduct as set forth in this Code.

1. Know the scope of maximum utilization of the LP/VN as specified by the nursing practice act and function within this scope.
2. Safeguard the confidential information acquired from any source about the patient.
3. Provide health care to all patients regardless of race, creed, cultural background, disease, or lifestyle.
4. Uphold the highest standards in personal appearance, language, dress, and demeanor.
5. Stay informed about issues affecting the practice of nursing and delivery of health care and, where appropriate, participate in government and policy decisions.
6. Accept the responsibility for safe nursing by keeping oneself mentally and physically fit and educationally prepared to practice.
7. Accept responsibility for membership in NALPN and participate in its efforts to maintain the established standards of nursing practice and employment policies which lead to quality patient care.

### INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

#### Definition

Practical/Vocational nursing means the performance for compensation of authorized acts of nursing which utilize specialized knowledge and skills and which meet the health needs of people in a variety of settings under the direction of qualified health professionals.

#### Scope

Licensed Practical/Vocational nurses represent the established entry into the nursing profession and include specialized fields of nursing practice.

Opportunities exist for practicing in a milieu where different professions unite their particular skills in a team effort: to preserve or improve an individual patient's functioning and to protect health and safety of patients.

Opportunities also exist for career advancement within the profession through academic education and for lateral expansion of knowledge and expertise through both academic/continuing education and certification.

### STANDARDS

#### Education

The Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse

1. Shall complete a formal education program in practical nursing approved by the appropriate nursing authority in a state.
2. Shall successfully pass the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses.
3. Shall participate in initial orientation within the employing institution.

*Legal/Ethical Status*

The Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse

1. Shall hold a current license to practice nursing as an LP/VN in accordance with the law of the state wherein employed.
2. Shall know the scope of nursing practice authorized by the Nursing Practice Act in the state wherein employed.
3. Shall have a personal commitment to fulfill the legal responsibilities inherent in good nursing practice.
4. Shall take responsible actions in situations wherein there is unprofessional conduct by a peer or other health care provider.
5. Shall recognize and have a commitment to meet the ethical and moral obligations of the practice of nursing.
6. Shall not accept or perform professional responsibilities which the individual knows (s)he is not competent to perform.

*Practice*

The Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse

1. Shall accept assigned responsibilities as an accountable member of the health care team.
2. Shall function within the limits of educational preparation and experience as related to the assigned duties.
3. Shall function with other members of the health care team in promoting and maintaining health, preventing disease and disability, caring for and rehabilitating individuals who are experiencing an altered health state, and contributing to the ultimate quality of life until death.
4. Shall know and utilize the nursing process in planning, implementing, and evaluating health services and nursing care for the individual patient or group.

a. Planning: The planning of nursing includes:

- 1)assessment/data collection of health status of the individual patient, the family and community groups
- 2)reporting information gained

from assessment/data collection

3)the identification of health goals.

b. Implementation: The plan for nursing care is put into practice to achieve the stated goals and includes:

- 1)observing, recording and reporting significant changes which require intervention or different goals
- 2)applying nursing knowledge and skills to promote and maintain health, to prevent disease and disability and to optimize functional capabilities of an individual patient
- 3)assisting the patient and family with activities of daily living and encouraging self-care as appropriate
- 4)carrying out therapeutic regimens and protocols prescribed by personnel pursuant to authorized state law.

c. Evaluations: The plan for nursing care and its implementations are evaluated to measure the progress toward the stated goals and will include appropriate person and/or groups to determine:

- 1)the relevancy of current goals in relation to the progress of the individual patient
- 2)the involvement of the recipients of care in the evaluation process
- 3)the quality of the nursing action in the implementation of the plan
- 4)a re-ordering of priorities or new goal setting in the care plan.
5. Shall participate in peer review and other evaluation processes.
6. Shall participate in the development of policies concerning the health and nursing needs of society and in the roles and functions of the LP/VN.

*Continuing Education*

The Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse

1. Shall be responsible for maintaining the highest possible level of professional competence at all times.
2. Shall periodically reassess career goals and select continuing education activities which will help to achieve these goals.
3. Shall take advantage of continuing education and certification opportunities which will lead to personal growth and professional development.
4. Shall seek and participate in continuing education activities which are approved for credit by appropriate organizations, such as the NALPN.

*Specialized Nursing Practice*

The Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse

1. Shall have had at least one year's experience in nursing at the staff level.
2. Shall present personal qualifications that are indicative of potential abilities for practice in the chosen specialized nursing area.
3. Shall present evidence of completion of a program or course that is approved by an appropriate agency to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for effective nursing services in the specialized field.
4. Shall meet all of the standards of practice as set forth in this document.

*GLOSSARY*

**Authorized (acts of Nursing)**

Those nursing activities made legal through State Nurse Practice Acts.

**Lateral Expansion of Knowledge**

An extension of the basic core of information learned in the school of practical nursing.

**Peer Review**

A formal evaluation of performance on the job by other LP/VNs.

person is particularly skilled and has specific knowledge.

### **Therapeutic Regimens**

Regulated plans designed to bring about effective treatment of disease.

### **Career Advancement**

A change of career goal.

### **LP/VN**

A combined abbreviation for Licensed Practical Nurse and Licensed Vocational Nurse. The LVN is title used in California and Texas for the nurses who are called LPNs in other states.

### **Milieu**

One's environment and surroundings.

### **Protocols**

Courses of treatment which include specific steps to be performed in a stated order.

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