



Memorandum

Subject: Licensed Practical Nurse Job Description

Date: Revised on 03/26/02

Job Summary

A licensed practical nurse under his or her license may perform nursing care, as that term is usually understood, of the ill, injured, or infirm, and in the course thereof may, under the direction of a licensed physician and surgeon, osteopathic physician and surgeon, dentist, naturopathic physician, podiatric physician and surgeon, physician assistant, osteopathic physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner acting under the scope of his or her license, or at the direction and under the supervision of a registered nurse, administer drugs, medications, treatments, tests, injections, and inoculations, whether or not the piercing of tissues is involved and whether or not a degree of independent judgment and skill is required, when selected to do so by one of the licensed practitioners designated in this section, or by a registered nurse who need not be physically present; if the order given is reduced to writing within a reasonable time and made a part of the patient's record. Such direction must be for acts within the scope of licensed practical nurse practice. [1995 c 295 § 2; 1994 sp.s. c 9 § 427.]

The licensed practical nurse recognizes and is able to meet the basic needs of the client, and gives nursing care under the direction and supervision of the registered nurse or licensed physician to clients in routine nursing situations. In more complex situations the licensed practical nurse functions as an assistant to the registered nurse and carries out selected aspects of the designated nursing regimen.

The functions of the licensed practical nurse makes practical nursing a distinct occupation within the profession of nursing. The licensed practical nurse has specific roles in nursing in direct relation to the length, scope and depth of his or her formal education and experience. In the basic program of practical nursing education, the emphasis is on direct client care. With additional preparation, through continuing education and practice, the licensed practical nurse prepares to assume progressively more complex nursing responsibilities. [Statutory Authority: Chapter 18.79 RCW. 97-13-100, § 246-840-705, filed 6/18/97, effective 7/19/97.]

WAC 246-840-715 Standards/Competencies.

Minimum standards of competency expected of beginning licensed practical nurses include the following:

- (1) **Standard I** - The practical nurse assists in implementing the nursing process. The nursing process is defined as a systematic approach to nursing care that has the goal of facilitating an optimal level of functioning for the client, recognizing cultural and religious diversity.

Competencies:

The components of the nursing process are assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating. Written and verbal communication is essential to the nursing process.

- (a) Assessment - Makes observations, gathers data and assists in identification of needs and problems relevant to the client.
 - (i) Makes basic observations of clients' safety and comfort needs.
 - (ii) Identifies physical discomfort and environmental threats to client safety.
 - (iii) Identifies basic physiological, emotional, sociological, cultural, economic and spiritual needs.
 - (iv) Collects specific data as directed.
 - (v) Identifies major deviation from normal.
 - (vi) Selects data from established sources relevant to client's needs or problems.
 - (vii) Collaborates in organizing data.
 - (viii) Assists in formulating the list of clients' needs or problems.
 - (ix) Identifies major short-term and long-term needs of clients.
 - (b) Planning - Contributes to the development of approaches to meet the needs of clients and families.
 - (i) Develops client care plans, utilizing a standardized nursing care plan.
 - (ii) Assists in setting priorities for nursing care.
 - (ii) Participates in client care conferences.
 - (c) Implementation - Carries out planned approaches to client care.
 - (i) Carries out nursing actions developed in care plan to ensure safe and effective nursing care.
 - (ii) Performs common therapeutic nursing techniques.
 - (iii) Administers medications safely and accurately, within institutional policies and procedures, and with knowledge of the medication being administered.
 - (d) Evaluation - Utilizing a standard plan for nursing care, appraises the effectiveness of client care.
 - (i) Collaborates in data collection relevant to outcome of care.
 - (ii) Assists in comparing outcome of care to formulated objective.
 - (iii) Assists with adjustments in care.
 - (iv) Reports outcome of care given.
- (2) **Standard II.** The practical nurse uses communication skills effectively in order to function as a member of the nursing team. Communication is defined as a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviors that serves as both a means of gathering information and of influencing the behavior and feelings of others.

Competencies:

Applies beginning skills in verbal, nonverbal and written communication, recognizing and respecting cultural diversity and respecting the spiritual beliefs of individual clients.

- (a) Uses common medical terminology and abbreviations.
- (b) Interprets common medical terminology and abbreviations.
- (c) Reports pertinent client communications regarding his/her physical and psychosocial welfare.

- (d) Develops a working relationship with the client, family, and health team members.
 - (e) Interviews clients to collect specific data with or without a structured tool.
 - (f) Identifies possible communication blocks.
 - (g) Recognizes that communication can be facilitated by certain responses.
 - (h) Interacts appropriately in a one-to-one relationship and in a group setting.
 - (i) Modifies own communication pattern.
 - (j) Documents observations and actions correctly in the chart.
 - (k) Demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively in the work setting.
- (3) **Standard III.** In a structured setting the practical nurse demonstrates responsibility for own actions by using common techniques of problem solving and decision making to plan and organize own assignment. Problem solving and decision making include utilization of available resources to secure a desired result.

Competencies:

- (a) Participates in self-assessment.
 - (i) Identifies own strengths and weaknesses.
 - (ii) Maintains personal health.
 - (iii) Maintains appropriate appearance.
 - (iv) Seeks assistance as needed.
 - (v) Requests recommendations for improvements.
 - (vi) Incorporates new and appropriate behaviors in nursing action.
 - (vii) Evaluates completion of assigned duties.
 - (b) Seeks learning opportunities that will foster growth.
 - (i) Plans goals for self-improvement of performance with help of a supervisor.
 - (ii) Seeks opportunities for personal vocational growth.
 - (iii) Utilizes new knowledge and skills.
 - (iv) Participates in staff development.
 - (v) Demonstrates knowledge of professional organization and other contributors to past and present nursing advancement.
 - (c) Applies knowledge of ethical and legal principles and responsibilities pertinent to self, clients, and others.
 - (i) Identifies scope and limitations of own role.
 - (ii) Functions within the law regulating the practice of practical nursing.
 - (iii) Demonstrates ethical practice in providing client care.
 - (iv) Respects and maintains the client's privacy interests.
 - (d) Practices conservation of available resources.
 - (i) Demonstrates an understanding of hospital and client costs by economical use of supplies and equipment.
 - (ii) Participates in nursing audit.
 - (e) Follows employer rules and regulations.
 - (i) Functions according to the job description, recognizing employer/employee expectations.
 - (ii) Explains employer rules and regulations as they apply to client and family.
- (4) **Standard IV.** The practical nurse assists in the health teaching of clients recognizing individual differences. Health teaching is defined as facilitating learning and instructing clients and significant others in preventive and therapeutic measures.

Competencies:

- (a) Health teaching - Assists in the development of teaching plans for the individual client.

- (i) Identifies major health education needs and problems of clients.
 - (ii) Communicates observation of health and learning needs.
 - (iii) Assists in individualizing the teaching plan to include others when appropriate.
 - (b) Implements teaching of basic health information according to the appropriate teaching plan.
 - (c) Communicates client's request for information to appropriate team member.
 - (d) Documents client teaching on the appropriate records.
- (5) **Standard V.** The practical nurse demonstrates an understanding of own role in the health care delivery system. Health care delivery systems are defined as the voluntary and governmental organizations and institutions at international, national, state, and local levels that influence health policy and encompass comprehensive services.

Competencies:

- (a) Functions as a practical nurse within the health care delivery system. (See chapter 18.79 RCW.)
 - (i) Functions within the role of the practical nurse.
 - (ii) Identifies the basic functions of members of the health care delivery team.
 - (b) Recognizes functions of health care delivery systems.
 - (i) Identifies supportive services in client care settings.
 - (ii) Identifies community resources.
 - (iii) Identifies the need for assistance from other agencies.
 - (iv) Demonstrates ability to obtain information about health care agencies.
 - (c) Acts as client advocate in health maintenance and clinical care.
 - (i) Recognizes the rights of individuals to control their own health needs and make decisions about health services.
 - (ii) Provides client education concerning health care delivery systems.
- (6) **Standard VI.** The practical nurse recognizes the need for change in a structured health care setting and demonstrates willingness to participate in effecting change. Change is defined as a systematic process that includes careful assessment and acceptance of responsibility for own actions, resulting in a significant alteration.

Competencies:

Recognizes need to adjust functions to comply with the accepted practical nurse role and assists in assessing effectiveness of current nursing practices in a given health care delivery system.

- (a) Recognizes problems and the need for change in current nursing practice.
- (b) Communicates needs for further change through appropriate channels.
- (c) Identifies personal factors which influence response to change. Adapts own behavior.
- (d) Accepts potential risks with instituting change.

[Statutory Authority: Chapter 18.79 RCW. 97-13-100, § 246-840-715, filed 6/18/97, effective 7/19/97.]

Salary Report

(This data is as of March 2002 from the website: www.salary.com)

A typical Licensed Practical Nurse working in Washington -- Tacoma earns a median base salary of \$36,177, according to our analysis of data reported by corporate HR departments. Half of the people in this job earn between \$34,619 and \$39,398.

A typical Licensed Practical Nurse working in Washington -- Seattle earns a median base salary of \$37,350, according to our analysis of data reported by corporate HR departments. Half of the people in this job earn between \$35,742 and \$40,676.

Print Name

Signature

Date