

The Board's Consultative Role

The Board provides information to the public, licensees, applicants, employers, educational programs, agencies, and other entities by responding to questions concerning scope of practice and educational standards, based on the *Oklahoma Nursing Practice Act and Rules*. The Board's annual report provides statistical information on nursing and summarizes Board actions. The Board offers other publications to further clarify complex issues, such as guidelines, declaratory rulings, and policies. Training for nurse managers and nursing education program directors is provided on a regular basis. In addition, the Board provides representation on statutory and advisory committees that address health care issues.

Complaints or Problems Related to Nursing Care

If the licensed nurse or AUAP is found to have violated the *Oklahoma Nursing Practice Act* or *Rules* governing nursing practice in Oklahoma, the Board may take disciplinary action and/or impose an administrative penalty. Grounds for discipline include behaviors that place or have the potential to place a client at risk of harm. Fraud, deceit or material deception in obtaining a license or certificate and violation of other laws and rules may also lead to disciplinary action. The disciplinary action may include a reprimand, education courses, probation, suspension or revocation of the license or certificate.

If you believe a licensed nurse or AUAP has acted in an incompetent or unsafe manner, do not hesitate to contact the Board of Nursing. When you contact the Board office, the Board staff may request you complete a form regarding your concerns.

For more information, contact:

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**Keep Your License,
Your Knowledge and Your Skills
Renewed and Current!**

This publication, printed by DCS-Central Printing is issued by The Oklahoma Board of Nursing as authorized by the Oklahoma Nursing Practice Act. [59 O.S. §567.1 et seq.] 1,500 copies have been prepared and distributed at a cost of \$ 259.00. Copies have been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. [74 O.S. § 3105 B]

OKLAHOMA BOARD OF NURSING



*The mission of the
Oklahoma Board of Nursing
is to safeguard the public's
health, safety, and welfare
through the regulation of
nursing practice and nursing
education.*

About the Board

The Oklahoma Board of Nursing was established to safeguard the public health and welfare of the residents of Oklahoma by ensuring that any person who practices or offers to practice registered nursing, practical nursing, or advanced practice nursing in this state is competent to do so. The Board also ensures that any person who practices or offers to practice as an advanced unlicensed assistive person (AUAP) in this state is competent to do so. The Board accomplishes this purpose through the regulation of nursing licensure, unlicensed assistant certification, nursing practice and nursing education.

The Board is composed of eleven members appointed by the Governor - six are registered nurses, three are licensed practical nurses, and two are citizens of the State who represent the public. The Board meets every other month and these meetings are open to the public. Meeting dates and the agenda are posted on the Board's website.

The Board employs an Executive Director, who is responsible for the administration of the agency, and other employees who work in administrative, technical, investigative and case-manager positions. Additionally, the Board retains an attorney as the Board's primary counsel.

Functions of the Board

Among the functions of the Board are the following:

- Approve nursing education and advanced unlicensed assistive personnel programs that meet prescribed standards;
- License/certify and renew the license/certification of duly qualified applicants;
- Issue/renew the certificate of recognition and prescriptive authority of advanced practice nurses;

- Maintain records of all licensed nurses and advanced unlicensed assistive persons;
- Investigate complaints received and conduct hearings on charges calling for disciplinary action;
- Maintain a Peer Assistance Program for nurses whose competency may be compromised by drug abuse or dependency;
- Provide consultation and conduct conferences, forums, studies and research on nursing education and practice.

Who Can Practice Nursing in Oklahoma?

Only individuals who are licensed by the Board may practice in the role of a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse. Only individuals who have a certificate of recognition from the Board may practice in the role of an advanced practice nurse. Only individuals who have a certificate from the Board may practice in the role of an advanced unlicensed assistive person.

The licensure/certification status of any licensed nurse, recognized advanced practice nurse, or certified advanced unlicensed assistive person may be verified online by using the Board's website.

Approval of Educational Programs

The Board regulates more than 75 educational programs to prepare individuals to practice as a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or advanced unlicensed assistive person. Nursing education programs are located in universities, community colleges, technical centers, and private vocational schools. Educational programs for advanced unlicensed assistive personnel may be provided in educational settings or in health care institutions. To be approved, programs must meet standards established by the Board.

The Board's Licensing Function

The Board evaluates and issues licenses and certificates to qualified individuals who have completed an approved educational program or who are licensed or certified in another state or country. To become licensed in Oklahoma, an individual must complete an approved nursing education program and submit an application for licensure with other required information, including an Oklahoma criminal history records search. Successful completion of a licensure examination is required.

The Board is also responsible for renewing licenses for more than 58,000 licensees during each two-year renewal cycle. Additionally, the Board renews the authority for practice for more than 1,600 advanced practice nurses (which include the advanced registered nurse practitioner, certified nurse midwife, clinical nurse specialist and certified registered nurse anesthetist) and advanced practice nurse prescriptive authority. The Board also renews certifications for more than 600 advanced unlicensed assistive persons who work in acute care facilities.

Oklahoma Peer Assistance Program

The Oklahoma Peer Assistance Program (OPAP) is the Board's voluntary alternative to the disciplinary process for nurses who have abused alcohol or other drugs. OPAP's services include development of an individualized structured plan of recovery, monitoring of participation compliance, encouragement and support of recovering nurses, and education on chemical dependency issues. All requests for information and/or assistance are confidential. For more information, contact the OPAP at (405) 525-2277.