

Use of Telehealth Technologies in the Practice of Nursing

Purpose

This interpretive statement provides direction to the individual licensed nurse who seeks clarification on their scope of practice in the use of telehealth technologies within their practice of nursing.

Background and Significance

The Board receives multiple inquiries from nurses asking if they may utilize or incorporate a specific telehealth technology (i.e., telecommunications device or application) within their nursing practice. Board staff cannot answer such questions as Oregon's Nurse Practice Act (NPA) does not contain lists of telecommunications technologies expressly approved or prohibited for use during one's engagement in the practice of nursing.

Board Statement

Whether one's practice of nursing occurs through the use of a specific telehealth technology, through more traditional methods, or a combination of both, the individual nurse is responsible to adhere to the same set of scope and standards of practice located in Chapter 851 Division 045 of Oregon's Nurse Practice Act. In adherence to Chapter 851 Division 045 standards, the nurse is responsible to determine whether their use of the specific telehealth technology in question is within their *individual scope of practice*.

Oregon's NPA defines the term individual scope of practice as a nurse's demonstrated competency that has been developed and maintained through practice experience and through engagement in independent and formal learning experiences. Clear knowledge of one's individual scope of practice allows the nurse to self-regulate their actions by accepting and engaging in only those nursing practice activities, including the use of a specific telehealth technology, for which they possess the knowledge, technical skill, ability, ethical principle, and clinical reasoning necessary to perform with safety.

To determine whether a specific telehealth technology is within one's individual scope of practice, the nurse is directed to access the Board's *Scope of Practice Decision-Making Framework* interpretive statement.

Oregon State Board of Nursing: Interpretive Statement

The decision-making framework prompts the nurse to identify the specific telehealth activity, intervention or role in question. A series of specific and sequential questions are then presented to which the nurse must respond.

It is only when the nurse's response to each question allows progression through all questions, and the nurse has an affirmative response to the final question, that the nurse may engage in the identified telehealth activity, intervention or role to acceptable and prevailing standards of safe nursing practice. At any time the nurse's response to a question results in a STOP, the activity is not within the nurse's individual scope of practice.

The *Scope of Practice Decision-Making Framework* interpretive statement is retrievable on the Board's Practice Statements and FAQs webpage.

References:

Ballard K, Haagenson D, Christiansen L, et al. (2016). Scope of Nursing Practice Decision-Making Framework. *Journal of Nursing Regulation*, 7(3):19-21.

National Council of State Board of Nursing (2014). *Position paper on telehealth nursing practice*.

Oregon Secretary of State (2019). Oregon Revised Statute 678.036 – Nurses; Nursing Home Administrators.

Oregon Secretary of State (2019, August 1). Oregon Administrative Rules Chapter 851 Division 45: Standards and Scope of Practice for the Licensed Practical Nurse and Registered Nurse.

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The Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN) is authorized by Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 678 to exercise general supervision over the practice of nursing in Oregon to include regulation of nursing licensure, education, and practice in order to assure that the citizens of Oregon receive safe and effective care. The OSBN further interprets statute and rule and issues opinions in the form of Policy and Interpretive Statements. These policies and interpretive statements are advisory in nature and issued as guidelines for safe nursing practice.