RN and LPN Scope of Practice
Components of Nursing Comparison Chart

By law, the scopes of practice for the registered nurse (RN) and the license practical nurse (LPN) differ. The RN functions at an independent level while the LPN functions at a dependent level. This chart provides a snapshot comparison. For more information, please refer to the NCBON’s RN Scope of Practice Position Statement and the LPN Scope of Practice Position Statement available on the North Carolina Board of Nursing’s website (www.ncbon.com) under Practice – Position Statements.

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<td>Independent role</td>
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<td>Accepting an Assignment</td>
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| Assessment                     | • Determines assessment  
                                  • Collects, verifies, and interprets data in relation to health  
                                  • Formulates nursing diagnoses | Participates in:  
• Collecting data  
• Recognizing relationship to diagnosis  
• Determining immediate need for intervention |
| Planning                       | • Identifies client’s needs  
                                  • Determines priorities of nursing diagnoses, nursing care goals, and interventions appropriate to client | Participates in identifying client’s needs through suggestion of goals and interventions for review by RN |
| Implementation                  | • Implements plan of care including procuring resources  
                                  • Assignment, delegation, and supervision of licensed and unlicensed personnel | Implements established plan of care with following limitations:  
• RN supervision required  
• Assignment to other LPNs and delegation to UAPs  
• Supervision by LPN limited to assuring that tasks have been completed according to agency policies and procedures |
| Evaluation                      | • Evaluates both effectiveness of nursing interventions and achievement of expected outcomes  
                                  • Modifies plan of care | Participates in evaluation by identifying client’s response to nursing intervention and suggesting to the RN revision to plan of care |
| Reporting and Recording         | Reports and Records  | Reports and Records |
| Collaborating                   | • Communicates and works cooperatively with individuals whose services may affect client’s health care  
                                  • Initiates, coordinates, plans, and implements nursing care of client within the multidisciplinary team | Participates in collaboration as assigned by the RN |
| Teaching and Counseling         | • Responsible to teach and counsel clients, families and groups  
                                  • Identifies learning needs  
                                  • Develops and evaluates teaching plans  
                                  • Makes referrals to appropriate resources | Participates in teaching and counseling of clients and families as assigned by the RN through the implementation of an established teaching plan or protocol |
| Managing Nursing Care           | • Manages nursing care  
                                  • Supervises, teaches, and evaluates nursing personnel | Not within the LPN scope of practice |
| Administering Nursing Services  | Administers nursing services | Not within the LPN scope of practice |
| Accepting Responsibility for Self | Accepts responsibility for self | Accepts responsibility for self |