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 – Clarification Position Statement and the LPN Scope of Practice – Clarification Position Statement available on the North Carolina Board of Nursing’s website (www.ncbon.com) under Practice – Position Statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Nursing Practice</th>
<th>RN Scope of Practice</th>
<th>LPN Scope of Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent role</td>
<td>Dependent role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting an Assignment</td>
<td>Accepts assignment based on variables in nursing practice setting and individual competency</td>
<td>Accepts assignment dependent on practice setting variables including availability of RN supervision, &amp; individual competency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Assessment                    | Responsible for comprehensive ongoing assessment to determine nursing care needs:  
  • Collects, verifies, analyzes, and interprets data in relation to health status  
  • Formulates nursing diagnoses  
  • Determines extent and frequency of assessment needed | Participates in on-going assessment:  
  • Collects data  
  • Recognizes relationship to health status & treatment  
  • Determines immediate need for intervention |
| Planning                      | Develops client plan of care:  
  • Identifies client’s needs  
  • Prioritizes nursing diagnoses  
  • Determines nursing care goals  
  • Determines interventions appropriate to client | Participates in planning:  
  • Suggests goals and interventions to RN |
| Implementation                 | Implements plan of care:  
  • Procures resources  
  • Assigns, delegates, and supervises 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 and determines effectiveness of nursing interventions and achievement of expected outcomes  
  • Modifies plan of care | Participates in evaluation by:  
  • Identifies client’s response to nursing intervention and suggests to RN revision to plan of care |
| Reporting and Recording       | Reports and Records | Reports and Records |
| Collaborating                 | Communicates & works with those whose services may affect client’s health care  
  • Initiates collaboration through coordinating, planning, and implementing nursing care of client within the multidisciplinary team  
  • Participates in multidisciplinary decision-making  
  • Seeks & utilizes appropriate resources | Participates in collaboration as assigned. |
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</table>
| Teaching and Counseling       | Responsible to teach and counsel clients, families, groups and nursing care providers:  
• Identifies learning needs  
• Develops and evaluates teaching plans  
• Makes referrals to appropriate resources | Participates in teaching and counseling of clients and families as assigned through the implementation of an established teaching plan or protocol |
| Managing Nursing Care         | Continuous availability  
• Assesses capabilities of personnel  
• Delegates & assigns personnel  
• Accountable for nursing care given by all | Not within the LPN scope of practice  
NOTE: See limited supervisory role for LPN in the Implementation Section above. |
| Administering Nursing Services| Administers nursing services | Not within the LPN scope of practice |
| Accepting Responsibility      | Accepts responsibility for self | Accepts responsibility for self |

References:
G.S. 90-171.20 (7) and (8) Nursing Practice Act  
21 NCAC 36. 024 Components of Practice for the Registered Nurse  
21 NCAC 36. 0225 Components of Practice for the Licensed Practical Nurse

Origin: 1/2012  
Reviewed: 2/2013  
Revised: 11/2015; 9/2018