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*A Position Statement does not carry the force and effect of law and rules but is adopted by the Board as a means of providing direction to licensees who seek to engage in safe nursing practice. Board Position Statements address issues of concern to the Board relevant to protection of the public and are reviewed regularly for relevance and accuracy to current practice, the Nursing Practice Act, and Board Administrative Code Rules.*

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**Issue:**

Restricting the title “nurse” is consistent with the mission of the North Carolina Board of Nursing to ensure minimum standards of competency and provide the public safe nursing care. Questions often arise about unlicensed individuals being referred to as a “nurse” and clarification is needed.

**Statement:**

In the interest of public safety and consumer protection, any person who refers to or portrays himself or herself in any capacity as a “nurse” in North Carolina must be licensed as a registered nurse or a licensed practical nurse. Unlicensed individuals working in healthcare, community, or other settings may not call themselves “nurse” or use “nurse” in their title. These unlicensed individuals are valuable members of the healthcare team, but do not have the education, training or knowledge of the licensed nurse. Whenever “nurse” is part of a longer title, such as “Nurse Aide”, the entire title shall be used at all times and not abbreviated to “nurse”. Identification should be clear and unambiguous and in compliance with the Badge Law for Health Care Practitioners. Title protection of “nurse” helps keep the public from being misled about the qualifications of those individuals providing their care.

**References:**

G.S. 90-171.43 – License Required – [Nursing Practice Act](#)  
[G.S. 90-640 – Identification Badges Required – Badge Law for Health Care Practitioners](#)  
[21 NCAC 36.0231 – Exceptions to Health Care Practitioners Identification Requirements](#)  
NCNA Position Statement on Protecting the Registered Nurse Title – [www.ncnurses.org](http://www.ncnurses.org)

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