



SCHOOL NURSE ORGANIZATION OF WASHINGTON

NASN POSITION DOCUMENT: Nursing Delegation to Unlicensed Assistive Personnel in the School Setting

Summary of the National Association of School Nurses Position Statement on Nursing Delegation is as follows:

It is the position of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) that the delegation of nursing tasks in the school setting can be a valuable tool for the registered professional school nurse (hereinafter referred to as school nurse), when based on the nursing definition of delegation (American Nurses Association [ANA], 2012) and in compliance with state nursing laws and/or regulations and guidance. Delegation *may* occur when the school nurse determines it is appropriate, but such delegation *may not* be appropriate for all students or all school nurse practice settings. The legal parameters for nursing delegation are defined by state laws that regulate nursing, State Board of Nursing guidelines, and Nursing Administrative Rules/Regulations (ANA, 2012; American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP], 2009). NASN, June 2014

The full NASN Nursing Delegation to Unlicensed Assistive Personnel in the School Setting can be found by following this link:

<https://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatementsFullView/tabid/462/ArticleId/21/Delegation-Nursing-Delegation-to-Unlicensed-Assistive-Personnel-in-the-School-Setting-Revised-June-2>

[ANA and NCSBN joint statement on delegation](#), Principles of Delegation states that:

- The RN takes responsibility and accountability for the provision of nursing practice.
- The RN directs care and determines the appropriate utilization of any assistant involved in providing direct patient care.
- The RN may delegate components of care but does not delegate the nursing process itself. The practice pervasive functions of assessment, planning, evaluation and nursing judgment cannot be delegated. The decision of whether or not to delegate or assign is based upon the RN's judgment concerning the condition of the patient, the competence of all members of the nursing team and the degree of supervision that will be required of the RN if a task is delegated.
- The RN delegates only those tasks for which she or he believes the other health care worker has the knowledge and skill to perform, taking into consideration training, cultural competence, experience and facility/agency policies and procedures.

- The RN individualizes communication regarding the delegation to the nursing assistive personnel and client situation and the communication should be clear, concise, correct and complete.
- The RN verifies comprehension with the nursing assistive personnel and that the assistant accepts the delegation and the responsibility that accompanies it. Communication must be a two-way process. Nursing assistive personnel should have the opportunity to ask questions and/or for clarification of expectations.
- The RN uses critical thinking and professional judgment when following the Five Rights of Delegation, to be sure that the delegation or assignment is:
 1. The right task
 2. Under the right circumstances
 3. To the right person
 4. With the right directions and communication; and
 5. Under the right supervision and evaluation.

Supplementary Information Specific to Washington State

In Washington State, [RCW 18.79.260](#) allows for delegation to unlicensed school personnel after ensuring that the student's condition is stable and predictable. The delegating nurse shall:

- Determine the competency of the individual to perform the tasks;
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the delegation;
- Supervise the actions of the person performing the delegated task; and
- Delegate only those tasks that are within the registered nurse's scope of practice.

The registered nurse is accountable for establishing systems to assess, monitor, verify and communicate ongoing competence requirements in areas related to delegation. There is both individual accountability and organizational accountability for delegation. Organizational accountability for delegation relates to providing sufficient resources, including:

- Sufficient staffing with an appropriate staff mix
- Documenting competencies for all staff providing direct patient care and for ensuring that the RN has access to competence information for the staff to whom the RN is delegating care
- Organizational policies on delegation are developed with the active participation of all nurses and acknowledge that delegation is a professional right and responsibility.
- The registered nurse is not allowed to delegate the nursing process to an unlicensed person.

In July of 2014 the Washington State Senate implemented [Senate Bill 6128](#) stating that Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP), school employees that are not considered licensed personnel as defined by [RCW 18.79](#). UAP's in the school setting that are asked to provide nursing services including procedures and medication administration, file a letter of intent to provide nursing services not previously

signed into law. The letter of intent must state their willingness to provide nursing services or administer medications at the time applicable for the student(s). The school employee has the right to refuse without reprimand from the employer and can rescind the letter at any time during the school year after notifying the school nurse. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has also issued an informational memo [M044-14](#) to assist schools and school nurses in updating guidelines.

The [Department of Health Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission advisory opinion](#) is supplementary to the updated laws and provides direction for the Registered Nurse (RN) to delegate appropriately in the school setting. It is the opinion of the advisory board that delegation of specific tasks is the decision of the supervising RN based on a decision tree and willingness of the UAP to provide the delegated services. This delegation can also be rescinded by the delegating RN for the following reasons:

- A significant change or decline in the student's health status that would make delegation unsafe.
- The UAP lacks sufficient training, knowledge, skills, or ability to perform a task safely and competently.
- A determination that the specific task requires nursing judgment.
- There is a change in school nurse assignment or school nurse turnover.
- The school nurse is no longer employed by the school or school district or there is a change in the school nurse's assignment.
- The school nurse is no longer under contract (for example, during summer vacation)

If delegation of nursing care is rescinded, it is the job of the registered nurse to document reasoning to include corrective action if appropriate. Documentation must also include a plan of action to provide continuous care to the student.

[Guidelines for Medication Administration In Schools](#) discusses types of medication administration on page 16.

Summary

The ability to delegate nursing tasks to students that are in stable and predictable health is a key aspect of a school nurse's job. Currently the state of Washington does not have one nurse per school building and often times find that they are unable to be in two places at one time. It is the responsibility of the school nurse to determine the appropriateness of delegating a nursing task to an unlicensed assistive personnel in the school setting. This delegation should only occur after the RN has determined that the student's condition is stable and predictable. The UAP must freely provide a letter of intent to perform the delegated tasks and if they choose not to provide the letter, there will be no consequences from the employer. The RN must also provide documentation that initial training was completed on an annual basis and have a way to assess the delegated task at regular intervals, to ensure that

the procedures being followed. The staff member may choose to rescind their letter at any time but must provide notice so that the school nurse can be sure to provide a plan to continue the nursing services. If the RN finds that the UAP is not acting in a safe manner, the condition of the student changes, or the nurse staffing changes, it is the option of that nurse to rescind delegation of the task to the UAP. When delegation is rescinded the nurse must provide documentation as to the reason along with a plan of action for the delegated task to continue. It is important to stress that the delegated tasks are to only be performed during school hours or school sponsored activities.

The School Nurse Organization of Washington recognizes the hard work of school nurses across the state. Furthermore, we appreciate the willingness of the school staff to assist with the care of our students.

REFERENCES/RESOURCES (APA Style).

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/NursingCommission>

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/6000/RegisteredNurseDelegationInSchoolSettings.pdf>

<http://www.k12.wa.us/HealthServices/default.aspx>

<https://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatementsFullView/tabid/462/ArticleId/21/Delegation-Nursing-Delegation-to-Unlicensed-Assistive-Personnel-in-the-School-Setting-Revised-June-2>

https://www.ncsbn.org/Delegation_joint_statement_NCSBN-ANA.pdf

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