



California School Nurses Organization

Position Statement

TITLE

Licensed Vocational Nurses in School Health Services

POSITION STATEMENT

The California School Nurses Organization endorses the employment and appropriate assignment of Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN) to assist Credentialed School Nurses in providing care to students, including medication administration and the provision of specialized physical health care services.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

Safe assignment of health services to students requires that the Credentialed School Nurse utilize professional nursing judgment to:

- Obtain and assess the accuracy and appropriateness of California licensed health care provider's orders and parent consent for health care procedures or medications.
- Develop an Individualized Health Plan, (IHP), 504 Plan, and/or Emergency Care Plan in collaboration with the student and family, health care providers, and school team.
- Review the student's written plan at least annually for any modifications or changes.
- Determine and document the level of care and supervision necessary to insure the safety of the student receiving medication or specialized health care procedure.
- Ensure that non-credentialed Registered Nurses (RN) and LVNs working in school health services can contact a Credentialed School Nurse at any time for direction and assistance and that they are, at a minimum, indirectly supervised.
- Oversee the activities of non-credentialed RNs and LVNs on a frequent, regular basis.
- Monitor and document the competency and performance of the LVN, no less frequently than annually, and more frequently as determined by the performance of the LVN and the complexity of the procedure.
- Provide both standardized and child-specific training prior to assignment of the service(s).
- Provide clear information to student and family and all school staff, including the



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non-credentialed RN and LVN, about the specific roles, responsibilities, and scope of practice of the Credentialed School Nurse, non-credentialed RN, and LVN in the school setting.

- Assure that school staff, including the non-credentialed RN and LVN, understand that the Credentialed School Nurse is the only person in the school with the official title of “School Nurse”.
- If contracting services, ensure that written contracted agency’s documents, including policies and procedures for the service or activity, documentation of training provided, and healthcare provider orders for student care are in the appropriate school file.
- Understand that the LVNs scope of practice includes the following, under the direction of the Credentialed School Nurse, not an independent practitioner:
 - collecting data via assessment
 - *participating* in planning
 - executes interventions in accordance with the care plan
 - *contributes to* the evaluation of interventions
 - provides basic nursing services
 - administers medication
 - applies communication skills for patient care and education
 - *contributes to* the development and implantation of a teaching plan for self-care

(Business and Professions Code, Division 5, Chapter 1, Vocational Nurses, 2015)

Definitions

1. **Licensed Credentialed School Nurse:** a registered nurse, licensed by the California State Board of Registered Nursing, as defined in #2 below. The school nurse holds a baccalaureate or higher degree from a college/university and a Health Services credential from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The credential is granted after the registered nurse completes a Commission-approved post-graduate school nurse program.
2. **Registered Nurse (RN):** a graduate of a formal nursing program (two-year associate degree or four-year baccalaureate degree), who is legally authorized (licensed) to practice nursing by the California State Board of Registered Nursing after passing the National Council Licensing Examination (NCLEX).
3. **Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN):** a graduate of a vocational nursing program (12 – 24 months after completion of high school education or equivalent), who is legally authorized (licensed) to practice vocational nursing by the California Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians after passing a national vocational nursing examination. The LVN must practice under the direction of a



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physician or registered nurse and is not an independent practitioner.

4. **Direct supervision:** Credentialed School Nurse shall be present in the same building as the person being supervised and able to respond quickly to the needs of the student or supervisee.
5. **Immediate Supervision:** Credentialed School Nurse is physically present, next to the student and LVN, providing close supervision and/or assistance.
6. **Indirect supervision:** Credentialed School Nurse is available to the qualified designated personnel, either in person or through electronic means, to provide necessary guidance, consultation, and referral to appropriate care and services.

RATIONALE

Due to advances in medical technology and increased integration of students with specialized health needs into regular classrooms, the numbers of medically fragile students in the school setting is increasing (Baker, Davis-Alldritt, & Hebbeler, 2014). Federal law mandates that students with health-related disabilities have access to all appropriate educational programs and related services (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004). The Credentialed School Nurse is the only staff member qualified and legally authorized to determine the plan for delivery of specialized physical health care services (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016; American Nurses Association and National Association of School Nurses, 2010; California Business and Professions Code, Division 2, Chapter 6, Sections 2700 - 2838.4).

It is imperative that the Credentialed School Nurse has the decision-making authority, administrative support, supervisory responsibility, and necessary resources to ensure safe care for students. Certain procedures that require nursing assessment or monitoring can only legally be performed by a Registered Nurse or delegated to a Licensed Vocational Nurse, including, but not limited to, insulin injections via syringe or pump device, reinserting the insulin pump device, reinserting a nasogastric or gastrostomy feeding tube, and the administration of other medications that are not legally authorized or that require nursing judgment or assessment.

REFERENCES

- American Academy of Pediatrics, Council on School Health. (2016). Role of the school nurse in providing school health related services. *Pediatrics*, 137(6). 1-6.
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Baker, D., Davis-Alldritt, L., & Hebbeler, K. (2014). Fact sheet. Children with special health care needs: Lost at school? - School Health and Children with Special Health Care Needs. Sacramento State University, California School Nurse Organization, Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health. Retrieved from https://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/mindinstitute/resources/resources_pdf/California-Schools-and-CSHCN-Fact-Sheets.pdf

California Business and Professions Code, Division 2, Chapter 6, Sections 2700 - 2838.4. California nurse practice act. Retrieved from <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov>

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California Education Code Sections 49423 Retrieved from <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov>

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004)

CSNO BOARD APPROVAL HISTORY

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