



Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation

Division of Professional Regulation

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GUIDANCE FOR NURSING STUDENTS

On March 9, 2020, Governor JB Pritzker declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area in response to the outbreak of COVID-19, and again on April 1, 2020, declared all counties as a disaster area in response to the exponential spread of COVID-19.

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (“Department”), Division of Professional Regulation (the “Division”) is issuing the following guidance for nursing students or recent nursing graduates in light of the recent brief entitled, “A Policy Brief: U.S. Nursing Leadership Supports Practice/Academic Partnerships to Assist the Nursing Workforce during the COVID-19 Crisis” (“Policy Brief”) issued by a collaboration of nursing leaders. This guidance also discusses the applicability of the Nurse Practice Act (225 ILCS 65/65-40) and its corresponding rules (68 IAC 1300) during the COVID-19 crisis.

The Policy Brief proposes academic-practice partnerships between healthcare facilities and pre-license Registered Nurse (RN) and Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) nursing education programs during the COVID-19 crisis in order to meet academic and workforce needs. Specifically, the Policy Brief proposes that nursing students who are enrolled in a Board-approved pre-license RN or LPN education program be employed by the facility on a full or part-time basis and work in the role of a nursing student for compensation and, in conjunction with the student’s nursing education program, or receive academic credit toward meeting clinical requirements. The Policy Brief is available at:

https://www.ncsbn.org/Policy_Brief_US_Nursing_Leadership_COVID19.pdf

Illinois law does not prohibit practice/academic partnerships as proposed in the Policy Brief. A nursing student or recent graduate providing nursing care under the supervision of a licensed registered professional nurse will not be considered a violation of the Nurse Practice Act or its administrative rules.

The following describes the applicable guidelines for nursing students and recent graduates:

Nursing Students

- Nursing students are authorized to provide nursing care provided the student is currently enrolled in and actively pursuing completion of an Illinois-approved pre-licensure nursing education program,

practicing under the auspices of the program, and acting under the supervision of qualified faculty or with a registered nurse preceptor. *See* 68 Ill. Admin. Code 1300.340(g) and (j).

- If the requirements of Section 1300.340(g) or (j) are not met, the nursing student would be working as an unlicensed person and would be limited to performing only nursing tasks that are delegated by a licensed registered professional nurse. *See* 225 ILCS 65/50-75.
- The student may provide authorized nursing services as a volunteer, as an employee, or as a student obtaining clinical credit.

Unlicensed Nursing Graduates

- Recent nursing graduates are authorized to provide nursing care as long as the graduate completed a Board-approved LPN or RN education program. The nursing graduate is only authorized to provide nursing care under the supervision of an RN or APRN.
- The graduate may choose to volunteer or work as an unlicensed person and is limited to performing only nursing tasks that are delegated by a licensed registered professional nurse. *See* 225 ILCS 65/50-75.

Nursing Education Programs

- A qualified faculty or a registered nurse preceptor must supervise a student's nursing practice. 68 Ill. Admin. Code 1300.340(g) and (j).
- The Board has determined that the clinical opportunities outlined in this guidance for nursing students and unlicensed nursing graduates meet these requirements satisfy the Nurse Practice Act and its administrative rules.
- Nursing education programs do not need to submit requests to the Board for changes relating to their clinical programs due to COVID-19.