

RCW 28A.210.305 Registered nurse or advanced registered nurse practitioner—Duties relating to nursing care of students—Notice to school districts. (1) (a) A registered nurse or an advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW working in a school setting is authorized and responsible for the nursing care of students to the extent that the care is within the practice of nursing as defined in this section.

(b) A school administrator may supervise a registered nurse or an advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW in aspects of employment other than the practice of nursing as defined in this section.

(c) Only a registered nurse or an advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW may supervise, direct, or evaluate a licensed nurse working in a school setting with respect to the practice of nursing as defined in this section.

(2) Nothing in this section:

(a) Prohibits a nonnurse supervisor from supervising, directing, or evaluating a licensed nurse working in a school setting with respect to matters other than the practice of nursing;

(b) Requires a registered nurse or an advanced registered nurse practitioner to be clinically supervised in a school setting; or

(c) Prohibits a nonnurse supervisor from conferring with a licensed nurse working in a school setting with respect to the practice of nursing.

(3) Within existing funds, the superintendent of public instruction shall notify each school district in this state of the requirements of this section.

(4) For purposes of this section, "practice of nursing" means:

(a) Registered nursing practice as defined in RCW 18.79.040, advanced registered nursing practice as defined in RCW 18.79.050, and licensed practical nursing practice as defined in RCW 18.79.060, including, but not limited to:

(i) The administration of medication pursuant to a medication or treatment order; and

(ii) The decision to summon emergency medical assistance; and

(b) Compliance with any state or federal statute or administrative rule specifically regulating licensed nurses, including any statute or rule defining or establishing standards of patient care or professional conduct or practice. [2017 c 84 § 2.]

Findings—Intent—2017 c 84: "(1) The legislature finds that:

(a) A registered nurse or an advanced registered nurse practitioner working in a school setting is authorized and responsible for the nursing care of students to the extent that the care is within the practice of nursing. A school administrator may supervise a registered nurse or an advanced registered nurse practitioner in aspects of employment other than the practice of nursing;

(b) Nursing is governed by specific laws and regulations and requires a unique license to practice. Clinical supervision of a nurse is based on knowledge of the laws, regulations, and rules governing nursing practice, nursing practice standards, and nursing performance standards;

(c) Student health needs have changed dramatically over the last twenty years. The number of students with special health care needs has risen exponentially;

(d) School nurses are held accountable through chapter 18.79 RCW and the uniform disciplinary act, chapter 18.130 RCW, for errors in nursing judgment and actions;

(e) Individuals who are not nurses are unqualified to make nursing judgments and assessments;

(f) The independent nature of nursing has been recognized in both statute and rule. For example, under RCW 18.79.040, "registered nursing practice" includes the "administration, supervision, delegation, and evaluation of nursing practice." Furthermore, continuing competency rules recently adopted by the nursing care quality assurance commission recognize and acknowledge the independent nature of nursing; and

(g) The ability of a nurse to practice nursing without the supervision of a nonnurse supervisor is particularly important given the primacy of the nurse-patient relationship.

(2) It is therefore the intent of the legislature to reaffirm the authority of a licensed nurse working in a school setting to practice nursing without the supervision of a person who is not a licensed nurse.

(3) It is not the intent of the legislature to:

(a) Prohibit a nonnurse from supervising a licensed nurse working in a school setting with respect to matters other than the practice of nursing, such as matters of administration, terms and conditions of employment, and employee performance; or

(b) Require a school to provide clinical supervision for a licensed nurse working in a school setting." [2017 c 84 § 1.]