OREGON NURSES ASSOCIATION

Nursing Practice Advisory #3, October 2002

Practice Advisory

RN Signature for the work of others

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Registered Nurses provide both direct patient care and indirect patient care through assignment to and supervision of others including Licensed Practice Nurses and Certified Nursing Assistants. This advisory addresses the RN responsibility when assigning portions of the patient's care to others.

The legal requirement for this advisory is the Administrative Rules that describe the scope of practice for RNs, LPNs, and Certified Nursing Assistants Citation: OAR 851-045-0010, 851-045-0005, and 851-063-0030.

1. **I have been directed to co-sign the chart for care provided by LPNs and CNAs. Should I do this?**

NO, the Registered Nurse is responsible for conducting patient assessment and formulating the plan of care. 851-045-0010 (2)(a). This can be done by direct assessment and/or by the use of information collected by others. For example, an LPN may obtain the capillary blood glucose that the RN uses to determine metabolic status and plan for intervention. The RN can assign the task of obtaining the blood glucose to an LPN because it is appropriate to the LPN scope of practice and RN has knowledge that the individual is competent to perform the test. A CNA could also perform the test. In either case3, unless the RN was present when the test was conducted, or repeated the test and got the same result, she/he would not sign the chart as having either performed or witnessed the performance of the test.

2. **What is the responsibility of RNs, LPNs, and CNAs for documentation in the patient's chart?**

Each category of nursing personnel is responsible for documenting care provide. In each of the sections on scope of practice, there is a requirement for documentation of assessments, observation and/or care provided by each category of nursing staff. The RN is responsible for verifying information as necessary in order to establish the plan of care. There is no requirement in the rule for an RN to co-sign the chart entry for either an LPN or CNA.

3. **What negative consequences could happen to me if I co-signed for the care another gave?**

You should be concerned that the chart could be read to mean that you were either present with the patient when the care was given or gave it yourself. That would be inaccurate or perhaps fraudulent. You could be liable for the deeds of others about