NURSE PRACTICE ALERT

LEGACY HEALTH - STANDARD OF CARE POLICY 900.3052

Situation:
Legacy nurses should be aware of Legacy Health’s recently announced Standard of Care Policy 900.3052 “Contingency Standards of Nursing Care” which may direct RNs in some Legacy Health Care settings to make reductions in assessment and documentation. The policy states that care planning may be deferred during certain “contingency standards of nursing care levels.”

Background:
Legacy management claims they have drafted “contingency standards of nursing care” in an attempt to manage insufficient nurse staffing. These standards have reduced requirements for RNs such as frequency of vital signs and documentation. Nursing executives indicate that some components of patient assessment, as well as care planning, may be deferred.

Assessment:
The Oregon Nurse Practice Act (NPA) requires RNs to conduct a comprehensive assessment and use the data to “develop a client-centered plan of care based on analysis of the client’s problems or risks.” Even in times of crisis, RNs must perform a comprehensive assessment of the client and develop a care plan that mitigates the risks to the client.

Nursing management must create policies that keep patients safe! Per the NPA: “Developing, modifying, or implementing policies that jeopardize client safety” is conduct derogatory to the standards of nursing.

Recommendations:
RNs should be aware of this policy and be vigilant about possible implementation in your individual practice setting. RNs should: Continue performing comprehensive assessments and continue documenting and updating a client-centered care plan for every patient, every shift; Escalate your concerns of Legacy’s policy “Contingency Standards of Nursing Care” to nursing administrators and practice leaders; Demand the policy be changed immediately to keep patients safe and align with requirements in the NPA, and; Document your escalation actions!

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR ONA BARGAINING UNIT LEADERSHIP

Additional Practice Questions:
Contact ONA’s Professional Services Team at 503 293 0011 or by email at practice@oregonrn.org
You may also contact your Labor Representative for assistance