



ALABAMA BOARD OF NURSING

INSIGHTS

Collaborative Practice and the New Normal for Healthcare

As the COVID-19 crisis continues to evolve, a number of employers have contacted the Alabama Board of Nursing regarding allocation of licensed staff, including advanced practice nurses, within their facilities. With this in mind, I wanted to address opportunities available under the ABN Administrative Code for nursing.

During 2020, Governor Kay Ivey issued a public health emergency declaration allowing licensed healthcare facilities to utilize CRNPs and CNMs in collaboration with facility CMOs or their designees. Although the declaration has expired, current ABN rules do not preclude such collaborations from commencing with hospital-based physicians.

Please note, however, that the recently-increased 9:1 APN-to-physician FTE limit applies to all new collaborations. Further, this recent change provides greater flexibility for existing collaborations. If you currently are practicing under a limited protocol that is more restrictive, you and your physician are free to apply to practice under a standard protocol, which would allow your practice to expand, without interfering with the FTE calculation.

Alabama APRNs did an outstanding job this past year, demonstrating your competence and value through hard work and care for our patients. I cannot thank you enough for all that you have done in the most challenging of circumstances.

ALABAMA BOARD OF NURSING

770 Washington Avenue, Suite 250
Montgomery, Alabama 36104
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 303900
Montgomery, AL 36130-3900
334.293.5200 • 800.656.5318
fax: 334.293.5201

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Warning: Scammers Continue to Target Alabama Nurses

The ABN continues to receive reports of attempts to defraud Alabama nurses, especially APRNs. These scammers are able to spoof phone numbers and forge documents to give the appearance of official contact from the ABN. Please be assured that no ABN employee would ever ask you to "tell no one of an investigation" nor request immediate payment of any fee or fine. Everyone is entitled to due process and the ABN adheres to formal procedures, including sending each

nurse a written Notice of Investigation, when investigating complaints.

If you receive contact from someone claiming to be an ABN investigator, please note the caller's information and contact the ABN at 334-293-5200. Do not give money or personal information to these individuals, as we have your information on file at the ABN.

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RESPONDING TO CRISES

Implementation of Licensed Healthcare Facility Emergency Operation Plans

Several years ago, the ABN recognized the need for healthcare facilities to rapidly deploy advanced practice nurses based on community events (active shooter, disease, mass casualties, area specific disaster, etc.) With such events in mind, the Board enacted §610-X-4-.16(9), which will allow for rapid deployment within a healthcare facility.

§610-X-4-.16(9) provides that, when a licensed healthcare facility activates its emergency operations plan in response to a community disaster [such as a communicable disease outbreak or weather event], “a licensed nurse or advanced practice nurse may act within such alternative clinical models or clinical department utilization as are provided in the emergency operations plan, provided that any such practice is within the scope of practice, education, training, and national certification of the licensed nurse or advanced practice nurse and congruent with any limits imposed in the Code of Alabama.” The rule further allows CRNPs and CNMs to “provide emergency treatment without immediate physician collaboration to patients within the affected areas of the community disaster, provided that the treatment is within the individual’s scope of education, training, and approved protocol.”

In order to employ these allowances within your facility, your emergency operations plan should address the alternative clinical models or clinical department utilizations that will be implemented under the specific circumstances of the relevant community disaster. As with any implementation of an emergency operations plan, the plan may be activated in part or in whole depending on the specifics of the facility plan.

STANDARDIZED PROCEDURES FOR APRNS

Board staff recently developed an online CE course, which outlines the specifics related to standardized procedures for advanced practice nurses. During the pandemic, the standardized procedures for CRNA practice with alternative settings was critical to the success of patient care. You may locate the course under “My Profile” titled Advanced Practice Beyond Basic Education: Opportunities for the Future.

In addition, this is a great opportunity to consider including Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS), who can function under independent nursing contracts. This role continues to be misunderstood and underutilized. Please feel free to visit <https://www.abn.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CNS-Independent-Contract-Framework-9-2018.pdf> and review the Board’s model CNS Contract Framework.

GRADUATE EDUCATION FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Applications for ABN Post-Baccalaureate Scholarships and Advanced Practice Education Loans remain open and available on the [ABN website](#). We encourage any interested parties to visit the page ASAP and apply. Please note, however, that all required documentation must be submitted; incomplete applications will not be considered.

For your convenience, the rules governing the two programs are excerpted below. You may review the complete rules on the ABN website.

Article 4: Post Baccalaureate Scholarships
(d) These scholarships shall be available to applicants seeking master’s or doctorate degrees in nursing. Doctorate degrees in education are also acceptable provided the applicant holds a graduate degree in nursing.

Article 6: Loan Repayment Program for Advanced Practice Nursing
(a)(1) The board shall establish and award, according to the judgment of the board, loans to provide for the training of qualified applicants for admission or students in accredited nursing education programs approved by the board who are pursuing, or have completed within the five years immediately preceding the current loan term, a graduate degree to become a certified registered nurse practitioner (CRNP), a certified nurse midwife (CNM), or a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA), but only for people who have signed contracts as provided in subsection (b). The board may permit eligible people to apply for a loan under the Alabama Loan-Repayment Program for Advanced-Practice Nursing in any scholastic year and for any previously completed scholastic year.

(2) The board may award to an eligible person, for as many as three years for a person pursuing or holding an eligible master’s degree and as many as four years for a person pursuing or holding an eligible doctorate degree, an annual loan not to exceed fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000), except that the board in each succeeding year may raise the maximum amount allowed for an annual loan by the average percentage increase for that year, compared to the previous year, in in-state tuition for graduate programs in advanced-practice nursing charged by public colleges or universities in Alabama.

NOTES

Free CE Offerings Available on the ABN Website

As we have for many years, the ABN is pleased to offer licensees dozens of hours of Board-developed CE, at no cost to the nurse. To access these courses, simply log into [My Profile](#) on the Board’s website and choose “My CE Record.” On this page, you are able to review your current CE credit and to access the courses, using the “Online Courses” tab.

This page is especially useful for nurses preparing to renew their licenses, as it serves as a one-stop shop for more than enough CE hours to satisfy the 24-hour requirement for Renewal.

Our nation faces a substance abuse crisis.

At the Alabama Board of Nursing, we see every day the devastating effects of the disease of addiction, which destroys families, careers, and lives.

But we also see the hope that comes with successful recovery.

We want to spread that hope and we want you to help us. If you or a loved one has experienced a successful recovery from addiction, you can share your story with others and contribute to our efforts to fight the substance abuse crisis in America.

Simply send your story to testimonials@abn.alabama.gov

and we may share it, or parts of it, through our continuing campaign to encourage recovery among Alabama nurses and the public. You can be assured that you remain anonymous and that your personal information will never be shared without your consent.

If you have a recovery story to share, please send it and know that you have helped us help others build a better life.



**Voluntary
Disciplinary
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Program**