



ADVISORY OPINION # 25

Formulated: May 18, 1989

Revised: March 2011, July 2007, July 2005, July 2002, November 2001, March 2001, January 2001, July 1993

Reviewed: May 2006, July 1998, May 1997, March 1992

Question: Is it within the role and scope of responsibilities of the registered nurse (RN) to administer pharmacological agents intravenously for sedation?

The Board of Nursing for South Carolina acknowledges that it is within the role and scope of the responsibilities of the RN to administer medications for sedation as ordered by a licensed physician, dentist or Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN). THIS ADVISORY DOES NOT APPLY TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF AGENTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ANALGESIA/PAIN MANAGEMENT.

The Board recommends that the health care facilities have in place an educational credentialing mechanism which includes a process for evaluation and documenting the individual RN's competency relative to the management of the patient receiving intravenous sedation. This includes, but is not limited to, Basic Life Support (BLS), monitoring parameters, dysrhythmias, airway management, oxygen delivery, and pharmacological actions of drugs and emergency drugs administered. This evaluation and documentation shall occur on a periodic basis. Appropriate written policies, procedures, and standing orders should be developed that ensure the safety of patients receiving sedation.

RNs who are not qualified anesthesia providers:

1. May not administer agents used primarily as anesthetics or induction agents, including, but not limited to Ketamine, Propofol, Etomidate, Sodium Thiopental, Methohexital, Fentanyl*, all extrapotent opiates, nitrous oxide, or inhalation agents**. For situations requiring the immediate facilitation of airway management (intubation), the RN may administer IV agents if a qualified provider is immediately present and available if needed to secure the airway.

* The RN may administer Fentanyl by bolus if s/he has successfully completed a course in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), or the Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP), which establishes competency in airway management and resuscitation appropriate to the age of the patient. Certification has to be current.

** The RN with specialized education and training, in settings where critical care nursing can be provided, may initiate, titrate, and bolus intravenous agents with the understanding that the airway is secured and mechanically assisted.

2. May not be authorized to manage deep sedation or anesthesia for short-term diagnostic, therapeutic, or surgical procedures.

This statement is an advisory opinion of the Board of Nursing as to what constitutes competent and safe nursing practice.