



ADVISORY OPINION # 48

FORMULATED: March 2004

REVISED:

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May 2006

QUESTION: Is it within the scope of practice of the Registered Nurse (RN) to remove trans-thoracic (epicardial) pacing wire following open-heart surgery?

The Board of Nursing acknowledges that it is within the role and scope of responsibilities of the RN to remove trans-thoracic (epicardial) pacing wires following open-heart surgery as ordered by the physician.

The Board recognizes this responsibility is an additional act for the RN and requires the following guidelines:

1. Established agency policy and procedure are approved and signed by the nursing administrator and applicable medical director. Procedure is to include guidelines for patient monitoring and standing orders dealing with potential complications or emergency procedures.
2. The RN must complete an organized course of study relative to the removal of trans-thoracic (epicardial) pacing wires. The course is to include didactic classroom instruction followed by a period of supervised clinical instruction including return demonstrations.
3. The procedure is performed only in a medical facility where a cardiothoracic surgeon is present within the facility during the procedure and for one hour following the procedure should complications arise.

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