

RN Scope of Practice

Pursuant to the Nursing Practice Act (1999), registered professional nurses [statute, 335.016 (10), RSMo] are able to independently perform nursing acts including, but not limited to, the entries under (a) through (e) of the statute, 335.016 (10), RSMo, as long as they defensibly have the requisite specialized education, judgement, and skill and an authorized prescriber's order to administer medications and treatments when indicated [335.016(10)(c), RSMo]. Registered professional nurses may perform nursing acts without physician oversight [see also Missouri Supreme Court case, *Sermchief v. Gonzales*, 660 S.W.2d 683 (Mo.banc 1983)].

If registered professional nurses (RNs) are to perform acts "prescribed by a person licensed by a state regulatory board to prescribe medications and treatments" [335.016 (10)(c), RSMo] as part of a patient's care, an authorized prescriber-registered professional nurse relationship must clearly be in place and verbal or written orders from and cosigned by the authorized prescriber delegating the acts would be needed by registered professional nurses. The acts being delegated must be within the scope of practice of the authorized prescriber and the registered professional nurses must have the ability to perform the delegated acts defensibly, safely and competently.

For example, a physician-registered professional nurse contractual relationship may be established for the performance of medically delegated acts by a registered professional nurse in at least two (2) ways:

First, a professional relationship between a physician and a RN can be established and exercised through the traditional means of specific, and later cosigned, verbal orders from a physician or written orders, possibly in the form of protocols or standing orders, generated and signed by a physician and carried out by a RN. In this case, the relationship is not based on a jointly agreed upon practice arrangement and, therefore, would not constitute a collaborative practice arrangement.

Second, a registered professional nurse who is not recognized by the Missouri State Board of Nursing as an advanced practice nurse within a specific clinical nursing specialty area and role may enter into a written collaborative practice arrangement with a physician pursuant to the statute, 334.104.1, RSMo, and rule, 4 CSR 200-4.200 Collaborative Practice. Through a written agreement, jointly agreed upon written protocols, or written standing orders for the delivery of health care services, a physician may delegate to a RN who is not an advanced practice nurse the authority to administer or dispense drugs and provide treatment within the RN's scope of practice and consistent with the RN's skill, training, and competence.

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