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Colorado Department
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Guidelines For Delegation

To meet the needs of the public in the changing health care delivery system over the years, and to safeguard the life, health, property, and public welfare of the individual, the function of “Delegation of Nursing Tasks” was added to the scope of the Registered Nurse practice in June 1992. The Board promulgated rules and regulations that further define the Registered Nurse’s responsibility. Those rules and regulations were adopted in November 1992. To provide further guidance to the Registered Nurse, The Board formed a subcommittee to explore the issues facing the nurse in the implementation of Delegation. This subcommittee developed the “Guidelines for Delegation on Documentation and Orientation” which the Board approved in September 1996.

Now after approximately six years of experience with Delegation and these guidelines, a committee comprised of the representatives of Home Health Agencies, Hospice Agencies, Long Term Care Facilities, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (Health Facilities Division), the Colorado Board of Nursing, the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, the State Medicaid Office (Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing), CNA Trainer/Instructor from the Colorado Health Care Association and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services-Denver Regional Office has reviewed and revised the an original document formulated in 1994. The following Delegation guidelines in conjunction with the attached “Comparison of CNA/Skilled Tasks and Personal Care Provider/Homemaker Non-Skilled Tasks” are designed to be used as a tool for health providers in establishing protocols to direct staff in the provision of safe and effective health care.

Guidelines for Delegation

(Developed from Colorado Nurse Practice Act 12-38-132 Nurse Delegation Standards Chapter VIII)

Documentation

1. The agency/facility should develop policies/procedures/forms that address appropriate delegation and the role of the employees implementing delegation. Policies and procedures may vary from agency to agency and should address the following:
 - a) The criteria for delegation, assessment responsibilities of the delegating RN, and the procedure for delegation.
 - b) Limitations of the each delegation to one individual, for each skilled task(s) delegated, for one specific patient, for a given time period.

- c) Each delegated task(s) and each individual patient would need separate delegation and documentation of the requirements.
 - d) The requirements for instruction of the delegatee, competence evaluation or validation, ongoing monitoring of the delegatee's performance withdrawal/discontinuation of the delegation, documentation of the delegation (by the RN) and the task performance (by the non-licensed staff), documentation of patient's response to the delegation and frequency of supervision.
 - e) Any limitations set by agency policy/philosophy, as an example the Colorado Nurse Practice Act 12-38-132. (Delegation of nursing tasks) specifies "in no event may a registered nurse delegate to another person the authority to select medications if such person is not, independent of such delegation, authorized by law to select medications".
2. The Registered Nurse (RN)'s job description should reflect the RN's responsibility to delegate to other health care individuals or staff in accordance with State of Colorado Nurse Practice Act or other applicable state/Federal regulation. The non-RN job description should reflect his/her performance of delegated tasks in accordance with applicable state/Federal regulation.
 3. The agency should develop policy/procedure/forms to address orientation of staff to their respective responsibilities relating to delegation including performance of the task(s), adherence to safety and infection control standards, and the documentation of the task(s).
 4. The agency should develop policy/procedure/forms to address individual competency evaluation of the delegated skills/tasks.
 5. Documentation of delegation should include:
 - a) Knowledge of delegatee's ability to perform the task(s) (i.e. skills test or validation of competency.
 - b) RN's assessment (of patient, of task(s) and of delegatee) in determining the decision to delegate when the delegated task(s) goes beyond the functional job description of the delegatee.
 - c) Documentation in the patient's medical record should include the task(s) delegated, the specific delegatee, the RN delegator and the time frame for the delegation.
 - d) Evaluation of the patient's response to the performed delegated task(s) or procedure.
 6. A system for ongoing monitoring of compliance should be developed such as a chart audit/review, quarterly monitoring, yearly skills update.

Orientation

1. It is recommended that a formal orientation to delegation be provided to RNs implementing delegation and to health care individuals/staff who may receive delegated functions before delegation is implemented in the agency.
2. Orientation for the RN should include:
 - a) Explanation of the Nurse Practice Act and the Rules and Regulations for Delegation.
 - b) Explanation of the purpose and philosophy of agency including policies, forms and expectations about delegation.
 - c) Definition of the scope of practice of the licensed and non-licensed individuals.
 - d) Explanation and definition of the difference between assignment and delegation.
 - e) Information on how delegation is implemented in the respective agency, which includes examples and explanation of practical implementation.
 - f) Explanation of the limitations of delegation in respect to agency policy and philosophy and the State Nurse Practice Act.
 - g) Evaluation of the RN's understanding of delegation
3. Orientation for the non-RN individuals or staff should include:
 - a) Explanation of delegation and its purpose to include explanation of the Practice Act for the non-RN individuals or staff (if applicable) and Rules/Regulations for Delegation.
 - b) Explanation of the non-RN's role in delegation to include overall scope of practice of the licensed and non-licensed individuals.
 - c) Communication of the purpose and philosophy of agency including policies, forms and expectations about delegation.
 - d) Explanation and definition of the difference between assignments and delegation.
 - e) Provide examples and an explanation of practical implementation of delegation in the respective agency.
 - f) Explanation of the limitations of delegation in respect to agency policy and philosophy and the State Nurse Practice Act.
 - g) Evaluation of the individual's understanding of delegation.
4. Practice implementation with resource personnel available and a problem-solving plan in place.
5. Establish a system for ongoing monitoring of compliance, which involves all personnel.