



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Clinical Practice: Frequently Asked Question

Q: Can licensed practical nurses (LPNs) or vocational nurses (VNs) work in the PACU if they are qualified (such as having BLS, ACLS, hemodynamic courses, arrhythmia courses, starting IVs, drawing blood, and working PACU for years)?

A: In reference to the question regarding the role of LPNs in the perianesthesia setting, ASPAN does not have a standard or position statement that specifically addresses this, regardless of the type of surgical facility. The 2023-2024 Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practice Recommendations and Interpretive Statements, the Practice Recommendation address competencies, knowledge and skills for the perianesthesia registered nurse and competencies of the perianesthesia support staff.

Nurses are valuable members of the perianesthesia care team. LPNs/ VNs and Registered nurses (RNs) may provide some of the same care, there are differences between their scope of practice. RNs are responsible for the assessment, planning of care, implementation of the plan and evaluation of the outcome. Individual states and their boards of nursing (BON) oversee the scope of practice for each role and there are significant differences. Each BON has specific rules and regulations regarding the use of practical nurses and determines which tasks fall under the RN license and which can be performed by the LPN. Each facility also describes the role of the LPN on an institutional basis. In this question, it does not matter how long a nurse has been practicing in an environment, but the scope of practice delineated by their BON.

References:

1. American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses. 2023-2024 perianesthesia nursing standards, practice recommendations and interpretive statements. Cherry Hill, NJ; ASPAN.

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