



POSITION STATEMENT ÉNONCÉ

Nurses Association of New Brunswick • L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers du Nouveau-Brunswick

DELEGATION OF NURSING ACTS TO FAMILY MEMBERS

In accordance with the CNA *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses* (2002), “nurses should provide the desired information and support required so people are enabled to act on their own behalf in meeting their health and health care needs to the greatest extent possible.” The Nurses Association of New Brunswick supports the concept of self-care including the involvement of family members in the provision of care to assist clients in achieving the highest possible level of independence.

The *Nurses Act* (1984) prohibits the practice of nursing by anyone other than a nurse, but does not prevent “the caring for persons who are members of the family of the person rendering such care.” When delegating nursing acts to family members, the nurse has a responsibility to ensure that the safety of the client is protected. A nurse must assess not only the client’s care requirements, but also the home situation, and the family’s ability and willingness to perform the act before it is delegated. If in her opinion, delegating the act is in the best interest of the client, the nurse then provides the necessary instruction to the family member(s). A nurse evaluates the family member’s competency in performing the act, and provides for follow-up and continuing evaluation as necessary.

It is important to note that performance of the act or acts is client-specific, in that the family member would be trained and declared as “safe” to perform the required procedure for one client only. Therefore, the performance of that procedure would not be transferable to others.

Definition of family

“**Members of the family**” is interpreted to mean persons related by blood, marriage or adoption to the client, the common law spouse of the client and includes persons who would be related to the client by blood, marriage or adoption if the client were married to his or her common law spouse. Members of the family may also be interpreted to include those persons acting in “*loco parentis*,” meaning those acting in place of a parent, assuming rights, duties and responsibilities of a parent, and persons acting as guardians.

October 1989

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References

Canadian Nurses Association (2002). *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*. Author: Ottawa, ON.

Nurses Association of New Brunswick (1984). *Nurses Act*. Author: Fredericton, NB.