Nurse Practice Act (NPA) Analysis Summary December 2019

Background

In 2011-2012, the AHNA Practice Committee initiated a project to provide a specific state-by-state analysis of Nurse Practice Acts (NPA) that referenced or addressed holistic nursing, holism, and/or complementary alternative modalities (CAM) or integrative therapies within the scope of practice of registered nurses (RNs). The initial analysis was prepared by Rebecca Cohen, EdD, RN, MS, MPA, HNB-BC with assistance from intern Sophia Bergum. In the summers of 2013, 2014, and 2015, Sarah Schneider, originally an intern from Rogers State University in Oklahoma, contacted every Board of Nursing (BON) to verify and obtain updated information about NPA language changes pertaining to holistic nursing, holism, and CAM, as well as position statement adoption by the BON that addressed any aspect of these. In 2019, Megan Smith, AHNA staff, contacted every BON.

2019 Nurse Practice Act Analysis

This report is the 2019 summary of U.S. BONs in all 50 states and six jurisdictions licensing RNs, including Washington, DC. The AHNA website contains a listing of all the BONs and their respective websites and contact information, as well as the specific references listed in this report. These have been updated with relevant references and can be found at www.ahna.org/Resources/Publications/State-Practice-Acts.

Four states have direct references in their respective Nurse Practice Acts that mention holism/holistic as defined or that recognize holistic nursing as a specialty (IL, NV, OR, TX). Sixteen states incorporated references and/or position statements separate from their Nurse Practice Acts on holism/holistic treatments or CAM (also referred to as Complementary Integrative Health Approaches). Not all BONs are authorized to adopt position statements.

The following is a summary of AHNA’s findings for the 16 states that incorporated holistic-related references:

- Washington State Board of Nursing reviewed the “Medical Acupuncture: Scope of Practice for Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners Advisory Opinion” and approved it with one revision in November 2017. The advisory opinion provides a roadmap for ARNPs who are interested in incorporating acupuncture techniques into their nursing practice.
- Minnesota reaffirmed and adopted in December 2017 a statement of “Accountability for Utilization of Integrative Therapies in Nursing Practice with only minor technical changes.
- Kentucky adopted an Advisory Opinion in 2015 authorizing APRNs with formal education to perform acupuncture.
- Massachusetts revised their advisory ruling number 9801 in 2015 for the scope of practice for RNs and LPNs on holistic nursing and the incorporation of complementary integrative health approaches (CHA).
- California adopted a position statement in 2000 about holistic nursing titled “Complementary and Alternative Therapies in Registered Nursing Practice” and it was removed from their website September 2015.
- The New Hampshire BON recognizes alternative therapies as something that RNs can perform.
- Florida has a section of Chapter 456 that pertains entirely to alternative healthcare treatments by RNs. A new section of the Florida Statutes was implemented July 1, 2019, allowing The Department of Veterans’ Affairs to contract with a state university or Florida College System institution to provide any of the following alternative treatments: accelerated resolution therapy, equine therapy, Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) (which must be provided at a registered HBOT facility), music therapy, and service animal training therapy. Veterans qualify for the above treatments if he or she: Has been diagnosed by a healthcare practitioner (any licensed Chapter 464 Nurse) with service-connected PTSD or TBI.
- Texas revised its position statement 15.23 “The Use of Complementary Modalities by the LVN or RN” in January of 2013, which contains specific mention of CAM as long as the proper credentials (e.g. license, certification, registration) are held to safely engage in specific practices where applicable.
- New York has practice information on CAM, titled “Complementary/Alternative Medicine/Therapies [CAM].”
- North Dakota has a broad definition of nursing, encompassing holistic nursing and CAM, as well as a specific practice statement titled “Complementary and Alternative Therapies.”

This project is ongoing, and AHNA contacts each state BON at least once annually. The following information has been revealed since our initial analysis:

Compiled by Terri Roberts, JD, RN, Executive Director, AHNA. Contributors: Megan Smith, Tabetha Schoenfeld, Sarah Schneider, Rebecca Cohen, EdD, RN, MS, MPA, HNB-BC, and Sophie Bergum.