



January 3, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: Administrators of Renal Dialysis Facilities

FROM: Gwen C. Thompson, Bureau Chief
Bureau of Health Facilities Licensing

SUBJECT: Physician Extenders

Section 403.B.3 of S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 61-97 (Supp. 2004), Standards for Licensing Renal Dialysis Facilities, requires that "Current medical records shall contain: Documentation of physician's visit, at least weekly, by either progress note or run (flow)sheet for at least one year."

S.C. Code Section 40-33-20(41) defines a Nurse Practitioner as, "a registered nurse who has completed as advanced formal education program at the master's level acceptable to the board, and who demonstrates advanced knowledge and skill in assessment and management of physical and psychosocial health, illness status of persons, families, and groups. Nurse practitioners who perform delegate medical acts must have a supervising physician or dentist who is readily available for consultation and shall operate within the approved written protocols."

S.C. Code Section 40-47-910(6) defines a Physician Assistant as, "a health care professional licensed to assist in the practice of medicine with a physician supervisor." Additionally, Section 40-47-935 states that a "physician assistant is an agent of his or her supervising physician in the performance of all practice related activities including, but not limited to, the ordering of diagnostic, therapeutic, and other medical services."

Such knowledge/credentials as required by state law for nurse practitioners and physicians assistants are adequate for them to provide certain patient services in renal dialysis facilities that are similar to those that are also provided by physicians. Therefore, in the interest of establishing reasonable standards that can be met by providers and yet do not compromise the health and well-being of the patients of renal dialysis facilities, it has been determined that all renal dialysis facilities will be required to meet the standard outlined in the Section 403.B.3 of R.61-97 that requires documentation of physician's visits at least weekly, or, as an alternative:

The facility may choose to utilize a nurse practitioner and/or licensed physician assistant as a physician extender for dialysis patient weekly visits in accordance with established scope of practice subject to supervising physician protocols and provided that a physician visits one (1) or more times per month.

Furthermore, as it relates to compliance with other Regulation 61-97 standards, licensed physician extenders may provide appropriate client care subject to their scope of practice as defined in the South Carolina Code of Laws and within supervising physician protocols.

This memorandum applies to any renal dialysis facility licensed by the Department except where the Department has been finally upheld or affirmed in an enforcement action issued in accordance with S.C. Code Section 44-7-320, or otherwise finally resolved. For this class of renal dialysis facilities, the prohibition will be in effect for a period of twenty-four (24) months from the resolution date. This memorandum relates solely to South Carolina licensing standards. Any adverse condition(s) that may be related to this memorandum may result in revocation of the exception by the Department.

If there are any questions, you may call the Bureau of Health Facilities Licensing at (803) 545-4370.

GCT/dnf