MINNESOTA
BOARD OF NURSING

Statement of Accountability for Utilization of Integrative Therapies in Nursing Practice

The Minnesota Board of Nursing acknowledges the prevalence of alternative and complementary care offered in traditional healthcare settings and the number of nurses seeking to incorporate complementary care into their nursing practice. Complementary and alternative practices and integrative therapies may address health needs by promoting comfort, healing and well-being, and may be adjunctive or primary interventions in nursing care. The nursing profession has a long history of caring for patients in a holistic manner combining alternative and complementary therapies with conventional treatments. The Board believes the utilization of integrative therapies[1] and alternative health care practices within the practice of nursing should be consistent with the consumer expectation for public safety, without undue regulation or restriction on the integrative therapies desired by consumers. Nurses who employ integrative therapies in their nursing practice to meet nursing care needs and patient goals are held to the same accountability for reasonable skill and safety as they are with the implementation of conventional treatment modalities.[2] The statements which follow are particularly salient in the utilization of integrative therapies in nursing and therefore are emphasized here for the consumer and nurse.

Nurses who employ integrative therapies in their nursing practice to meet nursing care needs and patient goals are accountable to:

- Ensure patient safety is of primary importance by implementing appropriate interventions (conventional and integrative) as required by the circumstances, refraining from harmful interventions and being skilled in the interventions they employ and well informed of their uses, benefits and possible negative outcomes.
- Posses specialized nursing knowledge, judgment, skill and current clinical competence to perform the act with reasonable skill and safety.
- Assure any therapy or modality used by the nurse emanates from a recognized body of knowledge relative to nursing which supports the validity and efficacy of these practices as therapeutic treatment modalities.
- Provide patients with information needed to make informed decisions about their health and health care. This information includes the nature and consequences of the therapy, associated risks, possible side effects or contraindications, and the purposes, benefits, intended effects, expected duration and costs, if known.
- Work collaboratively with other health care providers and within the limits of the nurse's education and competence.
- Maintain ethical and quality standards of care as in other nursing interventions, the care that would be provided, and the manner in which a reasonable and prudent nurse would provide it, consistent

[1] Integrative therapies are also known as complementary or alternative therapies or medicine or "CAM."

[2] These guidelines do not alter the requirements of Minn. Stat. Ch. 146A which defines unlicensed complementary and alternative practitioners to include licensed nurses if the nurse does not hold him or herself out to the public as being licensed or registered by the commissioner or a health-related licensing board when engaging in complementary and alternative health care. Other requirements apply to nurses practicing under the provisions of Minn. Stat. Ch. 146A.

with generally accepted standards of nursing practice, the laws and rules governing nursing, and any other applicable regulations.

- Inquire about and document the use of integrative therapies by patients as part of health assessment and history taking.
- Ensure the integrative therapy is included in the patient's plan of care and is consistent with their mutually established goals and the overall treatment plan.
- Document the integrative therapy provided and the effectiveness in the nursing context using standard nursing diagnosis and outcomes.
- Ensure the therapy is consistent with any existing employing organization's mission, goals, policies and procedures.
- Abide by regulations for those therapies that require a separate license or certificate. For example, acupuncturists are required to be licensed; massage therapy is regulated by local ordinance in some locations.
- Refrain from engaging in a function or procedure that is prohibited by any other law or rule.

Adopted: April 3, 2003
Reaffirmed: February 4, 2010
Revised: December 7, 2017
Revised: July 28, 2026

Resources

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