

Vermont State Board of Nursing
Position Statement

**THE ROLE OF THE REGISTERED NURSE IN OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT FOR A
TREATMENT OR PROCEDURE**

Question: Is it within the scope of practice of the RN to obtain informed consent for a treatment or procedure?

Definition:

Informed consent for a procedure or treatment: Consent by a patient to a surgical or medical procedure or participation in a clinical study after achieving an understanding of the relevant medical facts and the risks involved (The American Heritage Medical Dictionary, 2007).

Background:

Healthcare facilities and providers are ethically and legally obligated to obtain informed consent for treatments and procedures, as specified in law and healthcare organization policy. The concept of informed consent is grounded in the principle that a person has a right to determine what shall be done with his or her body and a right to accept or refuse medical treatment. Adequate information must be provided and the person must be capable of making the decision in order for the decision to be "informed."

Position Statement which Reflects Nurse's Roles and Responsibilities:

It is within the scope of practice of the RN to obtain informed consent for a treatment or procedure if the following conditions are met:

1. The RN will perform the treatment or procedure
2. The treatment or procedure is within the scope of practice of the RN (see Vermont Board of Nursing position statement "Determining RN/LPN Scope of Practice plus Decision Tree")
3. The RN who will provide the procedure is able to provide the following information to the patient:
 - a. A description of the treatment or procedure
 - b. The indications for the treatment or procedure
 - c. Risks and benefits for the patient related to the treatment or procedure
 - d. Alternatives to the treatment or procedure, and risks and benefits of the alternatives
 - e. The probable consequences of declining the recommended treatment or procedure
 - f. Roles of others who may be involved in providing the treatment or procedure.

When obtaining informed consent, the RN provides information and responds to the patient's questions. Informed consent may be granted by the patient, or, if applicable, the patient's parent, guardian, or legal representative.

It is within the scope of practice of the RN to obtain informed consent for a treatment or procedure that the RN will perform.

The responsibility for obtaining informed consent resides with the professional who will perform the procedure. This responsibility may not be delegated. An RN or LPN may witness signatures on informed consent documents for procedures to be performed by other professionals.

References:

Arizona Board of Nursing (2012). Advisory Opinion: Informed Consent. Accessed online 9/26/2017 at <http://www.azbn.gov/AdvisoryOpinions.aspx> .

Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (2007). Revisions to the Hospital Interpretive Guidelines for Informed Consent, Ref: S&C-07-17.

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Reviewed:

This opinion is subject to change as changes in nursing practice occur.

PS-The RN Role in Obtaining Informed Consent for a Treatment or Procedure accepted by Board 11-13-2017