



## ***Arizona State Board of Nursing***

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An advisory opinion adopted by AZBN is an interpretation of what the law requires. While an advisory opinion is not law, it is more than a recommendation. In other words, an advisory opinion is an official opinion of AZBN regarding the practice of nursing as it relates to the functions of nursing. Facility policies may restrict practice further in their setting and/or require additional expectations related to competency, validation, training and supervision to assure the safety of their patient population and/or decrease risk.

**OPINION: KETAMINE ADMINISTRATION**  
**APPROVED: 11/15**  
**REVISED DATE: 5/2020**  
**ORIGINATING COMMITTEE:**  
**SCOPE OF PRACTICE COMMITTEE**

Within the Scope of Practice of X RN LPN

### **ADVISORY OPINION KETAMINE ADMINISTRATION**

#### **STATEMENT OF SCOPE**

It is NOT within the Scope of Practice of a Registered Nurse (non-CRNA) to administer IV Ketamine for the purposes of anesthesia. For sub-anesthetic ketamine given for sedation, refer to the Sedation: Deep, Moderate and Palliative advisory opinion.

It is NOT within the Scope of Practice of a Registered Nurse (non-CRNA) to administer IV or intranasal Ketamine via bolus dose for analgesia, except in areas capable of monitoring and managing complications of unintended sedation as per the Sedation: Deep, Moderate, and Palliative advisory opinion.

It is within the Scope of Practice of a Registered Nurse (RN) to administer low-dose (sub-anesthetic) IV or intranasal Ketamine for the purposes of pain control (analgesia), depression and sedation.

#### **I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Written policies and procedures are developed and maintained by the employer/facility. These policies must include, but are not limited to:
  1. Low-dose (sub-anesthetic) Ketamine must be prescribed within applicable legal and policy constraints by a credentialed and privileged licensed independent practitioner (LIP).
  2. Identification of dosage ranges and approved routes of Ketamine administration

- are defined including appropriate to the age of the patient.
  - 3. ACLS/PALS provider is readily available in the facility from the time the medication is initiated until completion of the continuous infusion, intranasal, or IV bolus.
  - 4. A validated sedation scale is used (e.g. Richmond Agitation Sedation Scale, Sedation Agitation Scale) to monitor for unintended sedation.
  - 5. Guidelines and equipment for patient monitoring, drug administration, and addressing potential complications.
  - 6. IV Ketamine infusion is prepared by pharmacy.
  - 7. IV Ketamine is infused via a dedicated IV line using an IV infusion pump preferably with smart pump technology.
  - 8. Only RNs who have completed an instructional program and have had supervised clinical practice can administer Ketamine.
- B. Specific requirements related to route/purpose of administration:
- 1. Low-dose (sub-anesthetic) continuous IV or intranasal Ketamine for chronic pain or treatment-resistant depression:
    - a. RNs may adjust the rate of infusion per a patient-specific order only.
      - i. Titration is NOT allowed.
      - ii. Ketamine IV bolus is NOT allowed prior to initiation, nor during infusion.
      - iii. Standing orders or protocols are NOT used.
    - b. RNs have the right and obligation to refuse to administer continuous IV Ketamine infusion that may induce moderate or deep sedation or anesthesia.
    - c. Minimal monitoring requirements include pulse oximetry, vital signs and level of sedation.
  - 2. Continuous IV, IV bolus, or intranasal Ketamine for moderate/deep sedation:
    - a. RNs must follow the Sedation: Deep, Moderate, and Palliative advisory opinion.
  - 3. Low-dose (sub-anesthetic) IV bolus (piggyback) or intranasal Ketamine for analgesia:
    - a. ACLS/PALS provider is readily available in the department from the time the medication is administered. Until completion of the procedure.
    - b. Minimal monitoring requirements include cardiac monitoring, pulse oximetry, vital signs and level of sedation.

## II. COURSE OF INSTRUCTION

- A. Only the RNs who have the knowledge and have demonstrated competency may administer low-dose (sub-anesthetic) IV or intranasal Ketamine for the purposes of pain control (analgesia), depression, and sedation. The instructional program includes but is not limited to:
  - 1. Anatomy and physiology of the respiratory system including principles of oxygen delivery, gas exchange, transport and uptake.
  - 2. Use of specialized monitoring equipment, sedation scale, pain scale, and smart pump functionality.
  - 3. Ketamine: Drug classification (general anesthetic, controlled substance),

preparation, onset, duration, desired effect, sub-anesthetic dose range, indications, contraindications, medication interactions, side effects, and adverse reactions.

4. Recognition of potential clinical complications and appropriate nursing interventions including unintended sedation.
  5. Levels of sedation (minimal, moderate, deep, and anesthesia) with an emphasis on minimal sedation.
  6. Nursing care responsibilities including but not limited to assessment, frequency of vital signs, monitoring and documentation.
- B. Completion of education and competency is available on file with the employer.

### **III. RATIONALE:**

Clinical studies have shown that low-dose continuous IV Ketamine may provide analgesia among opioid tolerant patients experiencing refractory post-operative pain, neuropathic pain, and chronic pain and that administration of low-dose IV Ketamine have resulted in improvement in mood and suicidal thinking. In addition, clinical evidence of the safety and side effect profile of low-dose Ketamine is similar to that of opioids. Institutions have incorporated the use of low-dose Ketamine into acute pain management practices to reduce the potential risk of chronic opioid use. A Registered Nurse may acquire the knowledge and skill required to safely administer Ketamine (an anesthetic agent) at sub-anesthetic doses.

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