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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: Role of the ARPN:
Treating and Prescribing of Medications to Self and/or Family**

APPROVED DATE: 03/27/2015

REVISED DATE: 05/2020

**ORIGINATING COMMITTEE:
APRN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Within the Scope of Practice of ___ LPN ___ RN X RNP

ADVISORY OPINION

ROLE OF THE ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE:

TREATING AND PRESCRIBING OF MEDICATIONS TO SELF AND/OR FAMILY

I. PURPOSE:

The Advisory opinion Statement was developed to clarify the standard of care for the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) regarding personal relationships with potential patients. APRN's can find themselves in situations in which they may feel compelled to provide medical aspects of care, including prescribing medications, to themselves, their family members, or other individuals with whom they have a close personal relationship. The standard of care requires the APRN to treat only those patients for whom the APRN has and maintains clinical objectivity-absent an emergency or under limited circumstances. Treating an individual, or one's self, where there exists a non-professional, personal relationship may jeopardize the APRN's ability to maintain clinical objectivity. This may also interfere with the patient development of a therapeutic relationship with his or her own, independent healthcare provider and/or may interfere with the treatment plan developed by the patient's established healthcare provider.

II. ADVISORY OPINION:

Legend or Non-scheduled Pharmaceuticals, Diagnostics, and Therapies:

The standard of practice requires that APRNs avoid treating themselves, family, or any other individuals with who the APRN has a relationship that affects the APRN's ability to use independent, objective, and sound nursing judgment when prescribing, except when the APRN is engaged in one or more of the following:

1. Treating minor, self-limiting conditions.

2. Providing care in an emergency medical situation in which immediate medical care is required for the preservation of health, life, or limb; and only when another qualified healthcare professional is not readily available.

When an APRN does provide care to self, family, or other individuals with whom the APRN has a relationship that may interfere with or affect the APRN's ability to use independent, objective, and sound clinical judgment, it is the APRN's responsibility to inform the patient's established healthcare provider of the treatment provided, when appropriate.

III. CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES:

It is a violation of the Nurse Practice Act to prescribe controlled substances to one's self or family members.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

- Family- means individuals who are related by blood, marriage, cohabitation, and adoption including self, direct ancestors and descendants, any parent, sibling, child, grandparent, grandchild, spouse, sibling of a parent and children of a sibling, domestic partners, significant others, or persons sharing a residence including in a guardian or other supervisory relationship.
- Treating or Treatment- includes ordering and performing tests, making and communicating a diagnosis, and prescribing medications.
- Minor Condition-is a non-urgent, non-life-threatening condition that requires a short-term care of a routine nature. The condition is not likely to lead to a more serious condition and does not require on-going monitoring.
- Emergency Medical Situation- a manifestation in which an individual is suffering or is at risk of sustaining serious bodily harm if medical intervention is not provided promptly.

V. APPLICABLE STATUTES AND RULES:

Arizona Revised Statutes:

§32-1601(26)(d) and (g)

(d) Any conduct or practice that is or might be harmful or dangerous to the health of a patient or the public.

(g) Willfully or repeatedly violating a provision of this chapter or a rule adopted pursuant to this chapter.

Arizona Administrative Codes:

For purposes of A.R.S. §32-1601 (26)(d), any conduct or practice that is or might be harmful or dangerous to the health of a patient or the public.

- **Section R4-19-403(1):** A pattern of failure to maintain minimum standards of acceptable and prevailing nursing practice;
- **Section R4-19-403(3):** Failing to maintain professional boundaries or engaging in a dual relationship with a patient, resident, or any family member of a patient or a resident;
- **Section R4-19-403(31):** practicing in any other manner that gives the Board reasonable cause to believe the health of a patient or the public may be harmed.
- **Section R4-19-511(C):** An RNP shall not prescribe or dispense drugs or devices without Board authority or in a manner inconsistent with law.
- **Section R4-19-511(D)(1):** Prescribing a controlled substance to oneself, a member of the RNP's family or any other person with whom the RNP has a relationship that may affect the RNP's ability to use independent, objective and sound judgment when prescribing;
- **Section R4-19-511(D)(4):** Prescribing for a patient that is not in the RNP's population focus of education and certification except as authorized in subsection (D)(5)(d);

References

Arizona Board of Nursing 2018 Arizona Board of Nursing Arizona Board of Nursing. (2018, May 23). Arizona Board of Nursing. Retrieved September 7, 2019, from <https://www.azbn.gov/sites/default/files/2018-12/ruleseffectivemay232018.pdf>
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<https://casetext.com/regulation/arizona-administrative-code/title-4-professions-and-occupations/chapter-19-board-of-nursing/article-4-regulation/section-r4-19-403-unprofessional-conduct>

Statutes, A. R. (2020, January 04). Arizona Legislative. Retrieved from Arizona Revised Statutes: <https://www.azleg.gov/ars/32/01601.htm>