



Protecting our Practice

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The theme for this issue of the *ANA-Ohio News Journal* is protecting our practice. ANA offers foundational publications that assist nurses to practice ethically and responsibly. Specifically, the *Code of Ethics for Nurses* (ANA, 2025) provides guidance for navigating today's complex healthcare environment. Complimenting this, the *Nurses Bill of Rights* (ANA, 2022) outlines eight non-negotiable rights nurses practicing in any setting. *The Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (ANA, 2026) describes the "who", "what", "where", "when", "why", and "how" of nursing practice, defining our scope and identifying core professional competencies.

At the state level, the Ohio Board of Nursing (OBN) establishes regulations to safeguard public health and safety. The Nurse Practice Act (OBN, 2026), found in Chapter 4723 of the Ohio Revised Code, and supported by the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC), sets the legal standards and regulatory requirements for licensure, certification, scope of practice, discipline, and pre-licensure nursing education (OBN, 2026).

Code of Ethics

According to ANA (n.d.), The *Code of Ethics for Nurses* serves as the gold standard for the practice of nursing. It establishes the foundational baseline for the profession and guides nurses in clinical decision making without dictating a specific framework or method. "The Code is a non-negotiable moral standard of nursing practice for all settings" (ANA, 2025, p. xi). The ten provisions outline nurses' responsibilities in six different relationships: nurse to patient (Provisions 1-3), nurse to nurse (Provisions 4 and 6), nurse to self (Provision 5), nurse to profession (Provision 7), nurse to others (Provision 8), nurse/nursing to society (Provision 9) and nursing to the global community (Provision 10) (ANA, 2025).The revised edition provides more specific guidance for modern practice, illuminates the current context of healthcare, and adds a tenth provision dedicated to the global community.

According to ANA (n. d.), the Code is a must have "trustworthy resource" that provides a clear framework for navigating complex ethical challenges. It provides "practical insights" and actional guidance for both nurses and educators, supporting real world decision-making and professional growth. Rooted in nursing's relational ethical tradition, it maintains a legacy of excellence —addressing today's healthcare demand while preserving its commitment to integrity and compassion.

Nurses' Bill of Rights

Registered nurses comprise the largest single group of healthcare professionals in the United States, totaling over four million clinicians (ANA, 2022). To support nurses in navigating the growing complexities of healthcare, the ANA established a set of non-negotiable professional rights. The Nurses Bill of Rights (ANA, 2022) outlines eight specific rights for all nurses. These include full authority to practice at the highest level for their education and license, ongoing professional development and shared decision-making, respectful and inclusive practice environments, and just healthcare settings that facilitate ethical nursing practice (ANA, 2022).

Additional core provisions include "safe work environments," "freedom for nurses to advocate for their patients," "competitive compensation," and "collective and individual rights for nurses to negotiate terms, wages, and work conditions of their employment in all practice settings" (ANA, n.d. p. 1).

Scope and Standards of Nursing Practice

The ANA document, *Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice*, (ANA, 2026) outlines six core standards of professional nursing practice using the critical thinking framework known as the nursing process. In addition to the standards of professional nursing practice, there are twelve standards relating to professional performance, which describe a competent level of behavior in the professional role. Together, these standards apply to all nurses, regardless of functional role or practice setting.

Each standard includes specific competency statements. Competency is defined as "the ability to apply knowledge, skills, and/or abilities, including intellectual behaviors that are required to meet performance and outcomes in professional nursing practice in a given context" (ANA, 2026, p. 98). The latest edition of the standards does not delineate competencies for the graduate-level prepared registered nurse (RN) or the advanced practice registered nurse (APRN); it focuses on competencies expected of all RNs. Competence refers to the foundational abilities required for nursing practice in a given context. Ultimately, professional competence is situational, dynamic, and functions both as a measurable outcome and an ongoing process of professional growth.

A model representing the regulation of professional nursing practice is included in the *Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (ANA, 2026). Professional nursing practice regulation serves to protect the healthcare consumer. The ANA workgroup developed this model to depict five integral components and the relationship of regulatory influencers governing nursing practice.

- **Evidence** is critical to the science of any profession and represents a base for the

influencers.

- **Nursing Practice** extends vertically as a flame from the base to form the core.
- **Influencers** surround the flame externally like the context created with a safety net or guard rail.
- **Quality** and **Safety** represent the focused health outcomes (ANA, 2026, pp. 77-78).

The influencers in the model include the *Code of Ethics, Nursing Professional Scope and Standards*, and specialty certification, as well as organizational policies and procedures in the practice setting and the legislative and regulatory authorities that govern nursing practice through state nurse practice acts.



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Nurse Practice Act

The Ohio Board of Nursing (OBN) regulates the practice of nursing in Ohio. It should be noted that every state in the United States sets laws to govern the practice of nursing, and there are regulatory variations from state to state. The OBN holds primary authority to enforce the Nurse Practice Act (NPA) and discipline licensees who violate statutes or administrative regulations. The NPA provides guiding principles for the scope of nursing regulation, which includes defining terms, the composition of the board, and nursing school educational program standards. In addition, the NPA delineates the scope of nursing practice, overseeing licensure processes, protecting titles, and providing grounds for disciplinary actions for violations (Boehning & Haddad, 2026).

Together, the ANA foundational documents and the state Nurse Practice Acts form the basis of clinical practice. Complementing these professional standards are regulations and accreditation requirements established by agencies such as The Joint Commission, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and state departments of health. Regardless of the practice environment, nurses are responsible for understanding and adhering to all applicable regulations and professional standards to protect their own practice and ensure safe, ethical, quality patient care. ■

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