

NEVADA STATE BOARD OF NURSING PRACTICE DECISION

Practice Question: Is it within the scope of practice for a Registered Nurse to function as a sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE)?

History: The first advisory opinion on performing functions as a sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) was approved by the Board on December 6, 1991. On May 16, 2001, the Nursing Practice Advisory Committee (NPAC) reviewed the Board's 1991 practice opinion. After receiving correspondences from the Board's Executive Director, community stakeholders, and practicing SANEs, the NPAC found it necessary to do additional research to further define the parameters for SANE practice. The NPAC accepted public comments in May 2002, September 2002, December 2002, February 2003, June 2003, August 2003, October 2003, and December 2003. Public comments were taken into consideration during review, discussion, and revision of the 1991 SANE practice decision resulting in a variety of revision recommendations. The Board adopted the NPAC's recommendations on April 1, 2004.

In August 2012, representatives of the Office of the Attorney General approached the Board about the lack of certified SANEs to meet the needs of the citizens of Nevada. Concerned stakeholders and registered nurses also met with Board staff to discuss removing the certification requirement for SANE practice in Nevada. Board staff received a letter from the International Association of Forensic Nurses on August 20, 2012, supporting the requested change. A proposed revision to the 2004 Practice Decision was presented at the NPAC meeting on October 30, 2012 and subsequently adopted by the Board on November 7, 2012.

In response to a practice clarification question heard by the NPAC on August 23, 2016, NPAC members sought consultation from a nationally recognized subject matter expert, R. Ekroos. Dr. Ekroos is recognized nationally and internationally for her work involving populations affected by violence, particularly for contributions in the areas of medical forensic practices and multidisciplinary responses to sexual violence. She is a Distinguished Fellow of the International Association of Forensic Nurses, a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, and has served as a subject matter expert/advisor to numerous entities locally, regionally, and nationally. Dr. Ekroos met in person with the NPAC at their meeting on December 6, 2016. During this meeting, Dr. Ekroos offered to review the current practice decision and assist the NPAC in revising the document to reflect current SANE practice, education requirements, and language. As a result, numerous recommendations were brought forward to the NPAC for their consideration and approval.

The NSBN finds it is within the scope of practice of a Registered Nurse to practice as a sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) provided the following guidelines are followed:

1. Medical forensic examinations are performed by a SANE for individuals:
 - a. Disclosing a history or concern of experiencing sexual assault.
 - b. Suspected of experiencing sexual assault.
 - c. Accused or suspected of committing sexual assault.
2. The registered nurse practicing as a SANE has completed appropriate additional education, including supervised clinical practice and demonstrated clinical

competencies.

- a. The completed didactic educational program content shall meet, or exceed, the *Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Education Guidelines* published by the International Association of Forensic Nurses.
 - b. The completed didactic educational program shall be specific for the population receiving medical forensic examinations (i.e., adult/adolescent, pediatric, or both).
 - c. A didactic education program for adult/adolescent medical forensic examinations shall include a minimum of forty (40) hours course work approved for continuing education credit or academic credit from an accredited educational institution.
 - d. A didactic education program for pediatric/adolescent medical forensic examinations shall include a minimum of forty (40) hours course work approved for continuing education credit or academic credit from an accredited educational institution.
 - e. A combined didactic education program for adults, adolescents, and pediatric medical forensic examinations shall include a minimum of sixty-four (64) hours course work approved for continuing education credit or academic credit from an accredited educational institution.
 - f. Supervised clinical practice shall be provided by a physician with knowledge of providing medical forensic examinations, an advanced practice registered nurse with knowledge of providing medical forensic examinations, or a registered nurse with documented competency and experience as a SANE.
 - g. The registered nurse practicing as a SANE shall demonstrate clinical competence to perform all aspects of a medical forensic examination for the population served.
3. The registered nurse SANE shall maintain proficiency, as required by the current standards of nursing practice, to be verified in circumstances of gaining and maintaining employment as a SANE or upon request by the Board pursuant to NAC 632.071, 224, and 225.
 4. While completing the SANE education program, the registered nurse practices within the SANE scope of practice under the direct supervision of the education program instructor, a physician, an advanced practice registered nurse, or another SANE with demonstrated and documented competence to provide forensic medical examinations.
 5. The registered nurse SANE practices according to established protocols, agency policies, and procedures approved by a program director, program coordinator, or medical director who is a physician or advanced practice nurse with prescriptive authority.
 - a. Established protocols shall include administering or dispensing medications for prophylaxis of sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy and referrals for additional care, follow-up, and other related

services when appropriate.

- b. Protocols, agency policies, and procedures for forensic medical examinations shall be maintained at the practice site and be available for review by the Board.
6. The registered nurse SANE maintains accountability and responsibility for nursing care related to forensic medical examinations and follows the accepted standard of care, which would be provided by a reasonable and prudent nurse.
7. The registered nurse SANE performs forensic medical exams in consultation with a physician or advanced practice registered nurse; never independently.

Additional requirements for pediatric forensic medical examinations involving individuals less than thirteen years of age:

1. All pediatric forensic medical examinations shall undergo retrospective peer review by a physician or advanced practice registered nurse.
2. All pediatric forensic medical examinations, which are deemed to have abnormal genital, ano-rectal, oral, or other abnormal physical findings, shall be referred to a recognized child sexual abuse expert who is a physician or advanced practice registered nurse for final diagnosis.
3. Collection of samples for medical or forensic analysis from a pediatric patient shall only be performed by a registered nurse SANE who has ongoing, documented competence in providing pediatric forensic medical examinations that meets, or exceeds, the *Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Education Guidelines* published by the International Association of Forensics Nurses.

References

- International Association of Forensic Nurses. (2017). *Forensic nursing scope and standards of practice* (2nd ed.). Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Association.
- International Association of Forensic Nurses. (2015). *Sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) education guidelines*. Elkridge, MD: Author.

Adopted by the Board: 4/1/04

Supersedes previous decision of 12/6/91.

Reviewed by the Nurse Practice Advisory Committee: 10/30/12

Revisions Adopted by the Board: 11/7/12

Reviewed by the Nurse Practice Advisory Committee: 02/06/18

Revisions Adopted by the Board: 03/23/18