

## Supervision of Registered Nurses

**Overview:** Registered nurses work in a variety of settings that may have other disciplines serving in supervisory/managerial roles.

**Purpose:** This document provides guidance on supervision of registered nurses in the workplace.

**Background:** The Washington Department of Health Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC) provides guidance on registered nurse scope of practice in Washington state, including the following:

“Most health care facilities or employers include an organizational structure that defines a person’s manager or supervisor. A non-nurse may be a “supervisor” of the registered nurse in an organizational structure related to human resource and administrative functions. This is different than the definition of “supervision” of a nursing activity. The nursing rules define “supervision” as the “provision of guidance and evaluation for the accomplishment of a nursing task or activity with the initial direction of the task or activity; periodic inspection of the actual act of accomplishing the task or activity; and the authority to require corrective action.” The registered nurse practices independently and does not require supervision or evaluation of nursing care. Only the registered nurse or advanced registered nurse practitioner may supervise and evaluate the practice of nursing.” (<https://doh.wa.gov/licenses-permits-and-certificates/nursing-commission/practice-information/frequently-asked-questions/registered-nurse>)

**Key Points:**

- A non-nurse may be the supervisor or manager of a registered nurse for elements of the position that are related to human resources or administration.
- “Only the registered nurse or advanced registered nurse practitioner may supervise and evaluate the practice of nursing.” (<https://doh.wa.gov/licenses-permits-and-certificates/nursing-commission/practice-information/frequently-asked-questions/registered-nurse>)

**References:**

Washington State DOH. (n.d.). Frequently asked questions – registered nurse. Retrieved from <https://doh.wa.gov/licenses-permits-and-certificates/nursing-commission/practice-information/frequently-asked-questions/registered-nurse>

Department of Health Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission. (2019). Advisory opinion: Registered nurse and licensed practical nurse scope of practice. Retrieved from <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Documents/6000/NCAO13.pdf>

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Registered Nurse and Licensed Practical Nurse Scope of Practice (2019).  
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