1.1: Scope of Practice Introduction

Learning Objectives

- Discuss nursing scope of practice and standards of care
- Compare various settings in which nurses work
- Describe contributions of interprofessional health care team members
- Describe levels of nursing education and the NCLEX
- Discuss basic legal considerations and ethics
- Outline professional nursing organizations
- Examine quality and evidence-based practice in nursing

You are probably wondering, “What is scope of practice? What does it mean for me and my nursing practice?” Scope of practice is defined as services that a trained health professional is deemed competent to perform and permitted to undertake according to the terms of their professional nursing license. Nursing scope of practice provides a framework and structured guidance for activities one can perform based on their nursing license. As a nurse and a nursing student, it is always important to consider: Just because your employer asks you to do a task…can you perform this task according to your scope of practice – or are you putting your nursing license at risk?

Nurses must also follow legal standards in when providing nursing care. Standards are set by several organizations, including the American Nurses Association (ANA), your state’s Nurse Practice Act, agency policies and procedures, and federal regulators. These standards assure safe, competent care is provided to the public.

This chapter will provide an overview of basic concepts related to nursing scope of practice and standards of care.