
NURSE PROTOCOLS

INTRODUCTION

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The nurse protocol legislation (O. C. G. A. § 43-34-23) enacted in 1989, authorizes Registered Professional Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) who are agents or employees of a county board of health or the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) and who are adequately prepared, to perform certain delegated medical acts under the authority of nurse protocol. Since the passage of this important legislation, the DPH has provided direction and guidance relative to public health nursing practice under nurse protocol.

The purpose of this nurse protocol manual is to provide guidelines and standards for public health nursing practice under nurse protocol. Every two years, the DPH Office of Nursing coordinates the ongoing process of reviewing, revising and updating the nurse protocols to be consistent with best practice, current technology and research; throughout that two-year cycle, revisions and updates to the nurse protocols and nurse protocol manual are made and distributed as needed. According to the Georgia Board of Nursing, Regulation of Protocol Use by Registered Nurses, a nurse protocol must be reviewed, revised or updated annually. GA Rules and Regulations 410-13-.01 (3), -.02 (2), -.03 (2). Although the DPH reviews, revises and updates the nurse protocols and nurse protocol manual every two years, the districts must review, revise and update the nurse protocols used by RNs and APRNs at least once annually and make certain that the nurse protocols are signed and dated at least once annually by the RNs, APRNs and delegating physicians. The term “annually” is at least once within a twelve-month period. Thus, protocols used by RNs and APRNs can be dated and signed within twelve (12) months from the previous date, but must not exceed twelve (12) months.

Nurse protocols become effective in districts when signed each year by the delegating physician(s). Each district must maintain a copy of the nurse protocol manual and all signed nurse protocols for five (5) years.

The updated and re-dated nurse protocol manual is posted on the Office of Nursing website (<http://www.health.state.ga.us/programs/nursing/publications.asp>).

Abbreviations used in this manual are consistent with the Georgia DPH policy, *Use of Abbreviations, Acronyms, Symbols and Dose Designations*.

New material and wording changes are highlighted in bold print. Names of nurse protocols that contain modifications in content are highlighted in bold print in the tables of contents; if the only change in a nurse protocol is that a reference has been updated, it will not appear in bold print in the table of contents.

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