

Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners

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RE: PERFORMANCE OF BLOOD GAS ANALYSES
BY LICENSED RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS

During its July 2012 meeting the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners (the "Board") considered your inquiry as to whether it is within the scope of practice of a respiratory therapist to "run blood gases" and "perform associated tests."

The Board asked that I acknowledge and thank you for your inquiry of June 12, 2012, and advise you that the practice of respiratory therapy in this state includes drawing blood samples for analyses to be performed on blood gas instrumentation, *provided* that such is conducted upon the written prescription or verbal order of a licensed physician (or physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse) and under a physician's direction and supervision.¹ Moreover, it is the Board's opinion that Glucose, Electrolyte and other testing reported *incidental to* (but not independently of) blood gas testing is within the scope of practice of respiratory therapy.

The Board's advice is predicated upon its expectation that in all instances a respiratory therapist performing such testing would be appropriately trained and qualified in the use of the equipment, which would be maintained by the hospital's clinical laboratory and in compliance of all quality control measures.

¹ *Respiratory therapy*, as defined by La. Rev. Stat. §37:3353(5)(l)(i) and the Board's rules (LAC 46XLV.2503A.1.i.) includes, among other items, the: '(l) Performance of specific procedures and diagnostic testing relative to respiratory therapy that are ordered by a physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant to assist in diagnosis, monitoring, treatment, and research, including: (i) Drawing arterial, venous, and capillary blood samples and other body fluids for analysis to determine laboratory values to be performed on blood gas instrumentation.'

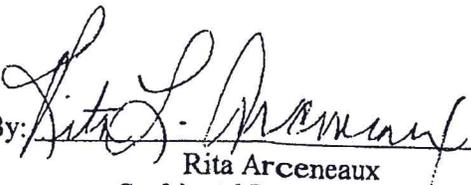
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Conversely, the scope of respiratory practice does not encompass drawing blood samples or the performance of blood gas analyses for any reason on non-respiratory therapy patients, or other than on the verbal or written order of a physician (or a physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse).

We trust the above is responsive to your inquiry. If not, please let us know.

Very truly yours,

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF
MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

By: 
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