



Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners
630 Camp Street, New Orleans, LA 70130
(504) 568-6820

*** *Advisory Opinion* ***

Re: Verification of PICC Line Placement
October 28, 2014

At its meeting this week, the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners considered your inquiry as to its views on the propriety of electrocardiogram (ECG) technology for verification of peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) line placement. We understand that the Louisiana State Board of Nursing has received a practice petition from a registered nurse (RN) for a rule change that would permit nurses, acting on a physician's order, to use ECG guided (*e.g.*, P-wave) technology, instead of the results of chest x-rays, to verify the proper placement and start the use of PICC lines. Inasmuch as whether or not it is appropriate for a physician to issue such an order in the first instance implicates the practice of medicine, you have solicited our input. The Board appreciates the spirit of your request and has asked that I acknowledge your inquiry and relay its advice.

In the Board's view, a chest x-ray has been and remains the appropriate standard of care for PICC line verification in this state. Although the Board is aware of the advances in technology in recent years with respect to ECG guided technology, and recognizes that it is currently used in some states for the purposes described, given that the use of a PICC line that is not placed correctly may lead to severe complications, it prefers to reserve further judgment for the time being pending the receipt of additional information verifying the safety, efficacy and parameters of the use this technology. In due course, we would also anticipate evidence of greater physician education of and familiarity with the technology in this state for the purposes stated, along with the development of appropriate protocols for use in various settings. Until then, the Board does not believe that it is consistent with the standard of care for a physician to place an order for an RN to verify PICC line placement, much less clear the line for use, without a chest x-ray.

We trust that the letter is responsive. If not, please let us know. In the meantime, we remain

Yours very truly,

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD
OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rita L. Arceneaux", is written over a horizontal line.

Rita L. Arceneaux
Confidential Executive Assistant