



**Respiratory Care Board of California and
Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians
Joint Statement - April 2019**

The Respiratory Care Board (RCB) and the Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT) began meeting in 2018 to discuss concerns related to reports of scope of practice issues occurring in sub-acute facilities, long-term care, skilled nursing facilities, and at-home care locations in California. Board members, staff, legal counsel and experts weighed in on the issues by considering current laws, education and training. Prioritizing both boards’ highest priority of public protection, the boards have agreed on a joint statement.

Both boards agree that respiratory care practitioners (RCPs), licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) and psychiatric technicians (PTs) are invaluable members of the patient care team in providing optimum care to patients. Each health care professional relies on others to perform their practice well. They establish a therapeutic interface among all health care personnel that benefits patients in their care and safety.

Both boards’ mandates require that “protection of the public shall be the highest priority... in exercising its licensing, regulatory, and disciplinary functions. Whenever the protection of the public is inconsistent with other interests sought to be promoted, the protection of the public shall be paramount.” (*Business and Professions Code sections 2841.1, 3710.1 and 4501.1*) Each board’s oversight responsibility is summarized below:

Respiratory Care Board of California (RCB)	Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT)
Responsible for licensing and regulating the practice of respiratory care pursuant to the Respiratory Care Practice Act (<i>Business and Professions Code section 3700 et seq.</i>). The RCB is statutorily charged with protecting the public from the unauthorized and unqualified practice of respiratory care and from unprofessional conduct by persons licensed to practice respiratory care (<i>Business and Professions Code section 3701</i>).	Responsible for licensing and regulating the practice of vocational nurses and psychiatric technicians pursuant to the Vocational Nursing Practice Act and the Psychiatric Technicians Law (<i>Business and Professions Code Section 2840 et seq. and Section 4500 et seq., respectively</i>).

The boards jointly agree that stakeholders should be aware that RCPs, LVNs and PTs must follow their respective scopes of practice for patient safety. Violating the respective scope of practice could lead to patient harm and the license being formally disciplined by the respective boards.

A concern to both boards is unlicensed and/or unqualified vendors instructing health care professionals to provide ventilator care. Both boards agree this is an unsafe practice. Further, section 3702.7 of the Business and Professions Code provides that the education of health care

professionals about respiratory care, including clinical instruction and the operation or application of respiratory care equipment and appliances is within the respiratory care scope of practice and would require licensure as an RCP.

Given that numerous patients admitted to sub-acute facilities, long-term care, skilled nursing facilities, and at-home care locations require respiratory care, with some dependent upon ventilators to sustain life, and given concerns for care that is being provided at some facilities in California, the RCB and the BVNPT issues this joint statement to inform administrators and staff at sub-acute facilities, long-term care, skilled nursing facilities, and at-home care locations on the following issues:

PATIENT CARE PRACTICES

Invasive Mechanical Ventilation

Invasive mechanical ventilation is a lifesaving intervention for patients with respiratory failure and is at the core of respiratory care practitioners' education, training, and competency testing. Given the clinical knowledge of the hazards, indications, contraindications of mechanical ventilation, and complexity associated with invasive mechanical ventilation, and that extensive and formal education and training is required to provide such care.

<p>Respiratory Care Practitioners are authorized to provide the following types of care (LVNs and PTs are not authorized to provide this care):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing any setting on a ventilator, with or without a physician's order. • Routine and/or emergent changing inner and/or outer cannulas. • Reconfiguring or changing aerosol or ventilator circuits. • Manipulating ventilator breathing circuits including disconnecting or reconnecting the circuit, for any purpose, including, but not limited to administering bronchodilator or nebulizer treatments. • Troubleshooting artificial airway problems and ventilator-related controls and alarms. • Assessment of a patient's response to ventilator adjustments or current settings. • Assessment for the placement and/or placement of a speaking valve or trach plugging. • Transporting patients intra or inter facility to daily activities and/or scheduled shower days. 	<p>Licensed Vocational Nurses and Psychiatric Technicians role in patient care:</p> <p>The LVN and PT are authorized to provide care to the patient receiving invasive mechanical ventilation when the care is not specifically related to the mechanical ventilation but is within the LVN or PT's scope of practice. That care includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Assessment (data gathering) of <u>total</u> patient. • Administration of ordered medications that do not require manipulation of the mechanical ventilator. • Provision of ordered treatments. • Hygiene care. • Comfort care. • Patient and family education. • LVNs and PTs are <u>not</u> responsible for ensuring the security of the artificial airway and related functionality of the ventilator before, during and after transport. However, LVNs and PTs can go as part of the team, but they are not responsible for the ventilator or related care.
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CARE/TREATMENT PLANS

Respiratory Care Practitioner	Licensed Vocational Nurses and Psychiatric Technicians
Recommend appropriate respiratory care intervention/s, and manage, or modify, respiratory care interventions based on the patient's response to therapy and written protocols approved by the medical staff.	Contribute data to the registered nurse needed for the evaluation process. However, LVNs and PTs cannot make clinical diagnosis of the patient's respiratory condition, and/or make respiratory care recommendations based on their clinical findings.

Both boards recognize that working titles using any derivative or synonymous meaning of the word "respiratory" for LVNs and PTs is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to: Respiratory Aide, Respiratory Nurse, Inhalation Nurse, etc.

Scope of Practice Questions and Information

Both Boards prefer written inquiries to ensure accurate and complete responses. Phone calls are accepted, and you will be requested to submit the inquiry in writing. Responses to written inquiries may take up to five business days depending on the complexity of the question.

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E-mail: rcbinfo@dca.ca.gov Telephone: 916.999.2190 Toll-free: 866-375-0386 Website: www.rcb.ca.gov	Email: bvnpt.sop@dca.ca.gov Telephone: 916.263.7843 Website: www.bvnpt.ca.gov

FACT SHEET

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