

**Vermont State Board of Nursing
Position Statement**

**Nurses Role in the Administration of a Local Anesthetic
Into a Catheter for the Purpose of a Nerve Block**

Question: May an RN inject the local anesthetic into a catheter for the purpose of a nerve block, i.e. interscalene or femoral block, when assisting the anesthesia provider in this procedure?

Definition(s)

Peripheral Nerve Block – a peripheral nerve block is a procedure whereby local anesthetic is injected near a peripheral nerve; this prevents pain signals from reaching the brain.

Local Anesthetic – a solution that blocks the transmission of pain signals along nerve pathways.

Anesthesia Provider – a certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) or Anesthesiologist (MD/DO)

Background

At times, the anesthesia provider may find themselves in need of assistance by the means of a “third hand” when performing a nerve block. It is at this time, the anesthesia provider may need the assistance of the RN to push the plunger of the syringe.

After review of the statutes, governing nursing practice, standards of nursing practice, and position statements written by other states, the Vermont Board of Nursing issued this position statement.

Position Statement which Reflects Nurse’s Roles and Responsibilities

The RN may perform the mechanical task of pushing the plunger of the syringe as the “third hand” when requested by and performed under the direct supervision of the anesthesia provider. The anesthesia provider must remain responsible for the appropriate administration of the medication which would include drawing up, mandatory labeling, needle positioning and associated medication administration responsibilities. The nurse must possess the competencies to perform the mechanical task of aspiration, rate of injection, and related procedure.

References/Citations:

New Hampshire Board of Nursing Practice Questions – January 2006
Maine Board of Nursing Practice Questions – Anesthesia – December 2008

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This opinion is subject to change as changes in nursing practice occur.