

**IDAHO BOARD OF NURSING
BELIEF STATEMENT ON
CONTINUED COMPETENCE AND CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Competence in nursing is the ability of the licensed nurse to perform skillfully and proficiently the functions within the role of the licensee. The role encompasses the possession and interrelation of essential knowledge, judgment, attitudes, values, skills and abilities, which are varied and range in complexity. Competency is a dynamic concept, changing as the licensed nurse achieves a higher stage of development within the role, and as knowledge expands.¹

¹From: " Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Continuing Competency" submitted and accepted by the Idaho Board of Nursing May 30, 1980

In its Mission to protect the public safety, health and welfare, it is the Board of Nursing's responsibility to hold licensed nurses professionally accountable for their own competence and ability to safely practice. The Board's duty begins at the time of initial entry to practice and continues throughout the nurse's licensed professional career to assure each licensee's acceptable attainment of initial competence, ongoing maintenance of competence and advancement of competence as he/she moves from novice to expert and generalist to specialist within the profession.

There is no empirical evidence that licensed nurses, as a group, lack competence. However, the Board believes that, in order to maintain active licensure once it is initially granted, nurses should periodically be required to demonstrate substantive steps to maintain professional competence.

The Board recognizes the need for demonstrated continued competence, but has as yet not identified a regulatory process that will assure that licensees meet minimum levels of competence throughout their careers. Nursing competence is multifaceted and can be difficult to measure. Nurses' careers take widely divergent paths, varying by professional role, practice settings, therapeutic modalities, levels of health care delivery and, of course, the clients being served.

The Board believes that the acceptable determinant or measure of a nurse's continued competence must:

- Be a reliable and valid measure
- Be cost effective (to nurses, employers, consumers)
- Be easily available and accessible
- Be suitable to a variety of clinical and functional settings
- Provide objective and measurable data

The Board has studied and discussed the issue of continued competence over time and has concluded that an acceptable solution to measuring ongoing nurse competence still does not and likely will not exist in the foreseeable future.

The Board believes that nurses who take personal responsibility to engage in purposeful activities to advance their own professional development will likely maintain acceptable levels of professional competence. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Continuing education
- Peer Review
- Formal/Academic study
- Professional scholarly activities
- Sustained active nursing practice
- Professional Certification
- Performance Evaluation
- Written examination

The Board believes engagement in these and other activities, both singularly or in combination, is appropriate toward this end and should be a requirement for sustained licensure throughout the career of every licensed nurse.

Adopted May 3, 2013