



*A Union of Professionals*

## AFT Healthcare Policy Statement

### **THE ROLE OF THE NURSE**

The Registered Nurse is responsible for the direct and indirect nursing care of the patient; a dynamic process, including the assessment of an individual's health status, identification of health care needs, determination of health care goals and development of a plan of nursing care to achieve these goals. The role of the Registered Nurse involves performance of both independent nursing functions and delegated functions and requires specialized knowledge, judgment and skill including the application of principles of biological, physical, social and behavioral sciences.

The Licensed Practical Nurse shares responsibility, under the guidance of a Registered Nurse, for promotion, restoration and maintenance of individual health. The Licensed Practical Nurse contributes to the nursing assessment by collecting, reporting, and recording objective and subjective data in an accurate and timely manner; participating in the development of the plan of care; assisting in the identification of nursing interventions and participating in the implementation of the plan of care.

All nurses must have authority commensurate with their responsibility for guiding the work of the various auxiliary and nursing personnel who are assigned to nursing units to perform various tasks which are a part of total nursing care.

In order to perform the duties for which they were educated and licensed, no nursing personnel should be required to perform non-nursing duties such as cleaning units following patients' discharge, delivering drugs from the pharmacy to the units, transporting stable patients and their records, transporting specimens and performing clerical duties. Every effort should be made to implement the transfer of such nonprofessional duties to other services or auxiliary personnel.

The education of a nurse continues even after a formal program of study has been completed. Nurses should be provided with in-service and staff development programs as part of their professional growth and development. It is the employer's responsibility to provide nurses with the educational opportunities to maintain a level of professional competence and knowledge consistent with advancing nursing technology.

- Adopted by the AFT Healthcare Program and Policy Council. October 1995.