

**Department of Health
Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission**

Advisory Opinion

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC) issues this advisory opinion in accordance with [WAC 246-840](#). An advisory opinion adopted by the NCQAC is an official opinion about safe nursing practice. The opinion is not legally binding and does not have the force and effect of a duly promulgated regulation or a declaratory ruling by the NCQAC. Institutional policies may restrict practice further in their setting and/or require additional expectations to assure the safety of their patient and/or decrease risk.

Title:	Cosmetic/Aesthetic Dermatologic Procedures	Number: NCAO 27.00
References:	RCW 18.79 Nursing Care WAC 246-840 Practical and Registered Nursing WAC 246-919-606 Non-Surgical Medical Procedures WAC 246-919-605 Use of Laser, Light, Radiofrequency, and Plasma Devices as Applied to the Skin Administration of Sedating, Analgesic, and Anesthetic Agents (PDF) Registered Nurse and Licensed Practical Nurse Scope of Practice (PDF) Standing Orders and Verbal Orders (PDF)	
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Conclusion Statement

The nursing laws and rules allow the appropriately prepared and competent registered nurse (RN) or licensed practical nurse (LPN) to perform cosmetic/aesthetic dermatological procedures within the legal parameters, competencies, and practice standards of the nurse’s license. The nurse may carry out medical regimens under the direction of an authorized health care practitioner (advanced registered nurse practitioner, physician and surgeon, physician assistant, osteopathic physician assistant, dentist, naturopathic physician, podiatric physician and surgeon, optometrist, or midwife) within their scope of practice. The nurse should use the [Scope of Practice Decision Tree](#) to determine if these activities are within the nurse’s legal and individual scope of practice.

Background and Analysis

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC) is frequently asked questions about nursing scope of practice and cosmetic/aesthetic dermatologic procedures. Related questions include whether the nurse can work in a medical spa, own a business, or contract with an authorized health care practitioner that performs cosmetic/aesthetic dermatologic procedures.

RCW [18.79.040](#) allows the RN to:

- Perform acts requiring substantial specialized knowledge, judgment, and skill based on biological, physiological, behavioral, and sociological sciences, including (but not limited to):
 - Observation, assessment, diagnosis, care or counsel, and health teaching with illnesses, injuries, disabilities, or in health promotion and preventive activities.
- Execute a medical regimen within the nurse's scope of practice as directed by an authorized health care practitioner. The authorized health practitioner does not need to be physically present.

RCW [18.79.060](#) and RCW [18.79.270](#) allow the LPN to:

- Perform acts that require the knowledge, skill, and judgment necessary to carry out selected aspects of nursing care under the direction of an authorized health care practitioner or under the direction and supervision of the RN including administering drugs/medications, and treatments including those that require piercing of the tissues and independent judgment that are within the nurse's scope of practice. The authorized health care practitioner or the RN does not need to be physically present.

The nursing laws and rules do not require a specific training course or certification. The institution or facility may require a specific training course or certification. The commission does not have authority regarding reimbursement, business requirements, or facility requirements.

Recommendations

The NCQAC recognizes that aesthetic/cosmetic and dermatological services refer to a broad range of procedures including personal care procedures and health maintenance/health promotion regimens incorporated into the patient's nursing care plan. Examples include promotion of skin integrity, promotion of self-image/esteem, hygiene, and patient education. The nurse may also perform aesthetic/cosmetic and dermatological procedures as part of a medically prescribed plan of care for treatment of dermatological conditions. The nurse must be competent. Specialty certification is one way to demonstrate competency.

- The nurse must know and comply with relevant state and federal laws and rules regarding using, selling, storing, prescribing, and supplying legend drugs and controlled substances.
- The nurse must comply with national safety standards, infection control standards, and professional recommended practice.
- The nurse must document appropriate education, competency and/or certification that represent a core of knowledge and skill needed to perform safe and effective care of patients receiving cosmetic/dermatologic services.

- The nurse must incorporate the nursing process into the care provided.
- The nurse must seek appropriate medical support when events occur that require interventions outside of the scope of the nurse.
- The nurse is expected to engage in ongoing professional development activities designed to maintain and increase their levels of knowledge and skill associated with the use of cosmetic/dermatologic services provided.
- The nurse should work in collaboration with appropriate health care practitioners to develop written policies, procedures, practice guidelines, and standing orders (if appropriate).
- The nurse must document the care provided.

Although RCW [18.79.040](#) allows the RN and LPN to carry out medical regimens without the directing practitioner being physically present, the NCQAC recommends the RN, LPN, and ARNP read, understand, and follow as appropriate the physician rules ([WAC 246-919-606](#) and [WAC 246-919-605](#)) related to cosmetic/aesthetic procedures. The commission recommends consulting with their legal advisor(s) for advice on starting a medical spa or private practice.

Conclusion

Performing cosmetic/aesthetic dermatologic procedures may be within the scope of practice of an appropriately prepared and competent RN or LPN. The nurse must follow clinical care standards and legal requirements.

References

Dermatology Nurses Association: <https://www.dnanurse.org/>

International Society of Plastic and Aesthetic Nurses (ISPAN): <https://ispan.org/position-statements.cgi>

College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA) Nursing Practice Information – Aesthetic Nursing: <https://www.nurses.ab.ca/practice-and-learning/nursing-practice-information/aesthetic-nursing>

Washington State Dermatology Association: <https://washingtnderm.org/>

North Dakota Board of Nursing Aesthetic-Cosmetic Procedures by Licensed Nurses: <https://www.ndbon.org/RegulationsPractice/PracticeStatements/Aesthetic-Cosmetic.asp>

Oregon Board of Nursing Interpretive Statement- The Nurse who Participates in Cosmetic Procedures: https://www.oregon.gov/osbn/Documents/IS_CosmeticProcedures.pdf

South Dakota Board of Nursing Dermatologic Procedures by Licensed Nurses: <https://doh.sd.gov/boards/nursing/AdvisoryPracticeOpinions/RoleNurseDermatologicalProcedures.pdf>