



STATE OF MARYLAND
DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Office of Health Care Quality
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Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor – Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor – S. Anthony McCann, Secretary

Transmittal

To: Maryland Hospitals and Ambulatory Surgical Facilities

From: Wendy Kronmiller, Acting Director, Office of Health Care Quality

Date: February 23, 2006

Re: Delegation of Registered Nurse Circulating Duties

Facilities in Maryland which provide surgical services where circulating duties are required periodically inquire if those duties may be performed by someone other than a registered nurse. In answering this question, the Office of Health Care Quality turned initially to the Maryland Board of Nursing for guidance. The Board had in fact addressed this issue during a regularly scheduled meeting on February 27, 2001. At that time the Board determined that it would be “inappropriate, unacceptable, and inconsistent with generally accepted standards of nursing practice for a registered nurse to delegate circulating duties to a certified surgical technician or certified nursing assistant”. During recent discussions with the staff at the Board of Nursing it was made clear that the delegation of these duties to a licensed practical nurse would be equally inappropriate.

Consistent with this unambiguous opinion of the Maryland Board of Nursing as well as various principles related to patient safety, it is the position of the Office of Health Care Quality that circulating duties which occur in Maryland hospitals and ambulatory surgical facilities must be performed by a registered nurse. Questions regarding this transmittal may be directed to any of the following individuals:

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