



Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA)

POSITION STATEMENT

The Mississippi Board of Nursing is a consumer protection agency with the authority to regulate the practice of nursing provided for by Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Title 73, Chapter 15.

A position statement is a scope of practice determination made by the Board, as to whether performance of an action by a licensed nurse is within acceptable standards. Position statements are administrative and educational tools that can be used to assist providers, licensed nurses, and other interested parties in scope of practice determinations. Position statements of the Mississippi Board of Nursing are formulated in response to the Board's legally mandated charge to protect the public through safe nursing practice.

BACKGROUND

The RNFA is a perioperative registered nurse who works in collaboration with the surgeon and health care team members to achieve optimal patient outcomes. The RNFA must have acquired the necessary knowledge, judgment, and skills specific to the expanded role of RNFA clinical practice. Intraoperatively, the RNFA practices at the direction of the surgeon and does not concurrently function as a scrub nurse.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

The appropriately prepared registered nurse may function in the role of RNFA according to the position statement adopted by the Association of Peri-operative Registered Nurses (AORN). The title RNFA should only be used by persons prepared/educated according to AORN's requirements for RNFAs and functioning in the capacity for which they were educated.

The Board has determined two tasks, suturing and procurement of the saphenous vein, belong solely to the RNFA. Along with other operative nursing behaviors, the RNFA practices under the direct supervision of the surgeon and does not concurrently function as the scrub nurse. Advanced surgical assisting skills may be performed by the registered nurse who has been appropriately educated in the expanded role of first assisting and who has met the criteria for using the title RNFA in accordance with AORN requirements. As additional education and experience are required to obtain the necessary technical skills and knowledge to function as the assistant to the surgeon during an operation, advanced surgical assisting skills are outside the scope of practice the registered nurse. Such expanded perioperative nursing concepts and perioperative nursing behaviors using the nursing process as the basis for providing nursing care to patients experiencing surgical intervention may be assumed only by the RNFA. The RNFA may not delegate advanced surgical

assisting interventions/tasks to the registered nurse. Further the registered nurse and RNFA may not supervise an individual practicing beyond his/her scope.

HISTORY

1. 10/2/2009: Converted from frequently asked question to position statement.
Reviewed: 04/11/2025

REFERENCE

Retrieved [www.aorn.org/https://www.aorn.org/docs/default-source/guidelines-resources/position-statements/first-assisting/posstat-rnfa-0908.pdf?sfvrsn=7d9f3037_6](https://www.aorn.org/docs/default-source/guidelines-resources/position-statements/first-assisting/posstat-rnfa-0908.pdf?sfvrsn=7d9f3037_6), April 2025.

Although the determination of medical procedures and the patient's medical status is a medical decision, the Registered Nurse has the right and the obligation to question orders and decisions which are contrary to acceptable standards and to refuse to participate in procedures which may result in harm to the patient.

