

NEVADA STATE BOARD OF NURSING
Practice Decision
The RN/LPN Scope of Practice Regarding Pessary Device
Interventions

Practice Question:

Is the insertion of a pessary within the scope of practice for an RN or an LPN?

Overview:

A pessary is a device placed into a vagina to support the uterus and/or bladder for the management of symptoms associated with pelvic organ prolapse and urinary incontinence to provide support to the affected areas to provide non-surgical treatment alternative and improve quality of life (Hagen et al., 2020; Neumann et al., 2021).

Complications of pessary use include vaginal bleeding, foul vaginal discharge, extrusion of the device, pain/discomfort, and disorders of defecation or new-onset urinary incontinence (Dwyer et al., 2019).

Recommendation:

The Nevada State Board of Nursing finds that it is within the scope of practice for a Registered Nurse (RN) or a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to remove, clean and reinsert a “donut” type pessary device provided that they have the required education and competence in accordance with NAC 632.225 or NAC 632.242.

Additionally, a properly trained RN/LPN may provide patient education of how to care for their own pessary to include removing, cleaning, and reinsertion of the device.

While there is not a standard approach to competency acquisition and maintenance, advanced education including didactic training and competency validation is recommended to ensure the delivery of safe, consistent, and evidence-based care (Dwyer et al., 2019). In some cases, patients may be able to perform pessary care themselves with support from the care team (Hagen et al., 2020).

The educationally prepared and properly trained RN/LPN must:

1. Complete formal education and training which includes demonstration of competence in the use and management of the device. Maintain documentation of annual updates of education and demonstration of competency (Dwyer et al., 2019).
2. Be educated on identification of common complications of coinfection, ulceration of the mucosa, and incarceration of the pessary that require reporting to the provider.
3. Must conduct pessary interventions in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the medical staff and nursing administration of the employing agency.

Relevant Nevada Administrative Codes;

The RN performing the procedure conforms with requirements set forth in NRS 632.235 and NAC 632.225

The LPN performing the procedure conforms with requirements set forth in NAC 632.242, NAC 632.230 and NAC 632.234 (f)

References:

- Dwyer, L., Bugge, C., Hagen, S., Goodman, K., Agur, W., Dembinsky, M., Graham, M., Guerrero, K., Hemming, C., Khunda, A., McClurg, D., Melone, L., Thakar, R., Kearney, R.. (2022). Theoretical and practical development of the TOPSY self-management intervention for women who use a vaginal pessary for pelvic organ prolapse. *Trials*, 23(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-022-06681-3>
- Dwyer, L., Kearney, R., & Lavender, T. (2019). A review of pessary for prolapse practitioner training. *British Journal of Nursing*, 28(9), S18-S24. <https://doi.org/10.12968/bjon.2019.28.9.S18>
- Hagen, S., Kearney, R., Goodman, K., Melone, L., Elders, A., Manoukian, S., Agur, W., Best, C., Breeman, S., Dembinsky, M., Dwyer, L., Forrest, M., Graham, M., Guerrero, K., Hemming, C., Khunda, A., Mason, H., McClurg, D., Norrie, J., Thakar, R., & Bugge, C. (2020). Clinical and cost-effectiveness of vaginal pessary self-management compared to clinic-based care for pelvic organ prolapse: Protocol for the TOPSY randomized controlled trial. *Trials*, 21(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-020-04738-9>
- Neumann, P.B., Radi, N., Gerdis, T.L., Tonkin, C., Wright, C., Chalmers, K.J., & Nurkic, I. (2021). Development of a multinational, multidisciplinary competency framework for physiotherapy training in pessary management: An E-Delphi study. *International Urogynecology Journal*, 33(2), 253-265. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00192-021-04843-6>

Approved by the Nursing Practice Advisory Committee on July 21, 1999. Adopted by the Nevada State Board of Nursing on September 17, 1999.

Revised May 11, 2023

Approved by the Board November 15-16, 2023