

1977 S.C. Op. Atty. Gen. 59 (S.C.A.G.), 1977 S.C. Op. Atty. Gen. No. 77-60, 1977 WL 24402

Office of the Attorney General

State of South Carolina

Opinion No. 77-60

February 21, 1977

*1 John C. Wilkie, Jr.
Executive Secretary
State Board of Pharmaceutical Examiners
Post Office Box 11927
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Mr. Wilkie:

You have requested an opinion from this Office as to whether or not a nurse licensed to practice nursing in this State can validly sign a prescription for a physician or upon a physician's order. In my opinion, she cannot.

While physicians (both medical and osteopathic), dentists and veterinarians are expressly authorized by their respective statutes to prescribe, nurses have been granted no such authority. Indeed, their statute provides in part that the practice of professional nursing means the 'administration of medications and treatments as authorized and prescribed by a licensed physician or a licensed dentist.' § 56-951(f), CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1962, as amended (Cum. Supp.). [Emphasis added.] Moreover, Regulation No. 2 of the Board of Pharmaceutical Examiners defines 'prescription' as an order for drugs or medicines either 'signed by a duly licensed physician, dentist, veterinarian, or other medical practitioner licensed to write prescriptions' or transmitted to the pharmacist by other means of communication by a 'duly licensed physician, dentist, veterinarian, or other medical practitioner licensed to write prescriptions . . .'. Inasmuch as a nurse is not licensed to write prescriptions, she cannot sign a written prescription.

With kind regards,

Karen LeCraft Henderson
Assistant Attorney General

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