

MDS Alert

WHAT DO YOU THINK?: Can An LPN Stage Pressure Ulcers?

Here's how to find out the answer.

Whether an LPN can stage pressure ulcers is one of those questions that raises more questions.

The answer "depends on whether the person is doing an assessment or pulling together information," says **Mary Arnold Long, MSN, RN, CRRN, CWCN, APRN, CLNC**, in Mason, OH. "The assessment component is the RN role, although there's sometimes a fine line there," Long adds, noting that "there are certainly organizations that certify LPNs as wound-care nurses."

Long encourages facilities to look at their state nurse practice acts to see if they clarify wound assessment. "If not, or if a state has interpretive statements, contact the state nursing board and ask if wound staging is within the LPN's scope of practice," she advises. In any case, a nurse staging pressure ulcers "should demonstrate ongoing competency in performing that function."

The legal reality: The facility has to ensure that individuals staging wounds work within their scope of practice and are qualified under the state practice act, emphasizes **Annaliese Impink, JD**, senior VP and associate general counsel for **SavaSeniorCare Administrative Services LLC** in Atlanta.