

## Delegation

Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) plans for appropriate utilization of staff at all levels of practice in accordance with the Massachusetts Nurse Practice Act and professional standards of practice. Delegation is the transferring to a competent individual the authority to perform a selected nursing activity/task in a selected situation. The framework for decision-making regarding delegation includes:

<b>The “Five Rights” of Effective Delegation</b>	
<b>RIGHT TASK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What tasks can be safely delegated?</li> <li>▪ What is the care need of the patient?</li> <li>▪ Who can best meet that need?</li> <li>▪ What criteria to consider in making the decision?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What <b>CANNOT</b> be delegated?</li> <li>▪ Any activity that requires professional:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Knowledge or judgment</li> <li>➤ Assessment</li> <li>➤ Specialized skill</li> <li>➤ Interventions</li> <li>➤ Evaluation of patient progress</li> <li>➤ Nursing process</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>RIGHT PERSON</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The right person</li> <li>▪ The right task, to the right person, performed on the right person</li> <li>▪ Training</li> <li>▪ Experience</li> <li>▪ Trust</li> </ul>
<b>RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES</b> (Decision-making Framework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential for harm</li> <li>▪ Complexity of the nursing activity</li> <li>▪ Problem solving and innovation</li> <li>▪ Predictability of outcome</li> <li>▪ Extent of patient interaction</li> </ul>
<b>RIGHT COMMUNICATION &amp; DIRECTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clear</li> <li>▪ Concise description of the task:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Includes objectives</li> <li>➤ Limits</li> <li>➤ Expectations</li> <li>➤ Cultural differences</li> <li>➤ Dialect</li> <li>➤ Style</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Tone (volume/silence)</li> <li>➤ Touch</li> <li>➤ Context of speech</li> <li>➤ Kinesics               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gesture</li> <li>○ Body language</li> <li>○ Eye behavior</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>RIGHT SUPERVISION</b> (Evaluation & Feedback)	<p><b>Supervision:</b> an active process of directing, guiding and influencing the outcome of an individual’s performance of an activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitoring</li> <li>▪ Evaluation</li> <li>▪ Interventions (as needed)</li> <li>▪ Feedback</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluation/Feedback               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Specific rather than general</li> <li>➤ Directed toward behavior (not the person)</li> <li>➤ Considers the needs of both the receiver and the giver</li> <li>➤ Well timed</li> <li>➤ Right place</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

There are a number of systems in place to assure that nursing personnel develop the skills to delegate appropriately including:

- **Position descriptions** outline accountability for specific job functions and tasks.
- The **Statement of Accountability** in the Nursing Practice Manual clearly states that the Department of Nursing is accountable for assuring that competent, compassionate nursing care is provided to all patients. A registered nurse on the staff of the Department of Nursing is accountable for the nursing care and for the coordination and implementation of the collaborative aspects of care for each patient.

Nursing care is prescribed by a registered nurse and may be delivered by a registered nurse or other nursing staff member.

The registered nurse assesses each patient and assigns care based on the needs of the patient and the qualifications and level of competence of nursing personnel. The registered nurse plans, supervises and evaluates the nursing care of each patient.

The accountability for nursing care and for the outcomes of nursing intervention is retained by the registered nurse assigned to the patient at all times even when that care is provided by others.

Nursing care assignments are the responsibility of a registered nurse who has the knowledge and experience necessary to make those decisions.

- All nursing personnel receive information during central **Nursing Department Orientation** on their legal scope of practice. The program educates all levels of personnel on delegation and includes the giving and receiving of delegation that fall within the legal scope of practice.
- **Unit Orientation** includes checklists of skills, tasks and competencies that must be completed in order for the new staff member to function independently. Completion of these tasks and attainment of skills and competencies can be used to guide the assignment of patients including unit-specific skills such as radiation training, chemotherapy administration, ventilator management, etc.
- **Nursing Directors, Clinical Supervisors and Resource Nurses** evaluate the staffing numbers on an ongoing basis. Staffing and workload decisions are adjusted on a shift to shift basis by the staff in consultation with the Nursing Director, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Clinical Supervisor or colleagues. Regularly scheduled staff can be supplemented with the central resource team, per diem staff or regular staff voluntarily working extra hours.