

# Clinical Nurse Specialists

## Act 49

**HB 1254, PN 2295**

**Sponsor: Rep. Gibbons**

**Date Enacted: July 20, 2007**

### **Summary:**

Act 49 amends Professional Nursing Law to clearly define, for the first time, the specific education and training needed to be licensed as a clinical nurse specialist (CNS), in addition it requires them to carry liability insurance for the services they provide.

### **Prior Law:**

The licensing and educational requirements for CNS's were previously not defined in state statutes or regulations. The Insurance Payment to Registered Nurse Law of December 19, 1986 (P.L. 1737, No. 209) listed CNS's as a category of nurse to be reimbursed for nursing services. House Bill 1254 amends the Professional Nursing Law of May 22, 1951 (P.L. 317, No. 69) to include definitions and provisions for certification (as detailed above).

### **Analysis:**

Act 49 amends Professional Nursing Law to define the licensing and education requirements for CNS's and provide for their certification. A "clinical nurse specialist" is defined as "a registered nurse licensed in this Commonwealth who is certified by the State Board of Nursing as a clinical nurse specialist." The "practice of clinical nurse specialist" is defined as "the provision of direct and indirect nursing at the advanced level." To be eligible for certification, an individual must: (1) be a licensed registered nurse, (2) have completed masters or post-masters work in an accredited nursing or CNS program, (3) be nationally certified as a CNS in a designated specialty or in an area pertinent to the designated specialty or meet equivalency requirements, and (4) meet all other State Board of Nursing requirements. The bill provides that to apply for certification, a licensed registered nurse must file an application with the Board and pay an application fee set by the board. To renew certification biannually, a CNS must complete 30 hours of Board-approved continuing education credits. Finally, this legislation mandates that CNS's carry the same level of professional liability insurance required of physicians performing similar healthcare services.

The law also mandates that CNS's may not engage in the practice of medicine (prescribing, distributing, ordering medication) or in surgery.

### **Impact:**

By defining the scope of practice for CNS's and providing for their certification, they are able to practice to the full extent of their education and training. As a result, they are able to provide high-quality care to more patients. As part of the package of scope of practice bills under Governor Rendell's Prescription for Pennsylvania, this will increase the overall efficiency of the healthcare system.

**Effective Date: 60 days from enactment**