

This resource is a result of the collaborative efforts of NHPCO's Next Generation Leadership Council.

Under the direction of the registered nurse and primary physician, the Licensed Vocational Nurse/Licensed Practical Nurse (LVN/LPN) is responsible for identifying patient/family needs and coordinating the care for the patient/family. As part of the interdisciplinary group (IDG), the LVN/LPN contributes and follows an individualized plan of care. The LVN/LPN utilizes monitoring intervention and teaching skills to maximize patient comfort and enhance the quality of life for the patient/family unit. Pledge to make the comfort and care of patients and families the highest priority; consistently provide a high level of personalized, sincere, and engaging service to patients and families at all times; ensure the complete satisfaction of patients and families; promptly and effectively address all concerns. The purpose of this document is to provide information on common skills that may be considered for the role of LVN/LPN.*

Required Skills

The following skills are considered mandatory for LVN/LPN.

■ State Licensure / Credentialing as required by your respective State

■ Ability to work on-call shifts (nights/weekends/holidays)

■ Compassion

- The ability to demonstrate understanding and concern for those suffering physically or emotionally.

■ Strong Communication

- Strong communication skills are necessary to work with the care team, the patient, their family, and any other medical professionals that may be involved in the patient or family's needs. The ability to be clear and answer questions as they're asked as honestly and as caring as possible.

■ Observation Skills

- Observing changes in the patient's behavior, speech, appearance, eating habits, and within the family can provide clues to other challenges that may be occurring.

■ Patience

- The ability to remain calm while in a potentially emotionally charged situation.

■ Organization

- As a caregiver, you will be caring for multiple patients. The ability to keep care needs, communication, and schedules organized is essential.

■ Interpersonal Skills

- Not everyone handles stress in the same manner. Interpersonal skills include knowing how to communicate with others, strong EQ, patience, observation, and compassion.

■ Flexibility

- No two patients, no two days, and no two deaths will look the same. Flexibility will allow you to adapt to the situation at hand.

■ Initiative

- The willingness to take charge and get something done when it needs to get done without being asked or told to do so.

■ Empathy

- Ability to use an empathetic approach when facilitating patient and family care.

■ Collaboration / Team Player

- Ability to collaborate effectively with the interdisciplinary team.

■ Professionalism

- Ability to maintain professional composure at all times, most especially during challenging and stressful situations.

■ Patient Advocacy

- Assist in facilitating freedom of choice.

■ Reliability

- Ability and willingness to complete assigned tasks and duties.

■ Integrity / Ethical

■ Trustworthy

Mid-level Skills

Ideally, LVN/LPN will have experience with the skills noted below but may not be experts in this area.

■ Cultural Awareness

- Having an awareness of other culture's customs, beliefs, and needs to help address end-of-life needs.

■ Emotional Strength

- Caring for the terminally ill can become emotionally exhausting. Self-care is important to maintain balance.

■ Teaching Ability

- Teaching and educating patients and caregivers is crucial in hospice & palliative care.*

LVN/LPN (cont.)

■ **Adaptability**

- Ability to assess, evaluate and adapt practices in caring for patients and families.

■ **Ability to multi-task**

- Ability to complete multiple tasks concurrently, as needed.

■ **Physical Strength**

- It may be necessary to move a patient, shift furniture, carry food/supplies, etc.

Preferred Skills

These skills are those that LVN/LPN may have experience with; however, they are not required for this position.

■ **Problem Solver / Critical Thinking**

- Demonstrated ability to assess and respond to the needs of patients and families in varied settings.

■ **Experience with death and dying**

■ **Medical knowledge of end-of-life care**

- Ability to demonstrate and relate medical knowledge in accessing hospice & palliative care services.

■ **Experience working with Electronic Health Records (EHR)**

■ **Basic Tech Skills & Troubleshooting**

- Able to use equipment fully in the field when needed and Ability to evaluate and assess basic technical issues such as poor connection, minor errors, etc.

Note: State requirements may dictate specific skill sets for LVN/LPNs. In that scenario, please default to the requirements of your state. Please also refer to CMS Conditions of Participation related to personnel requirements.