

Iowa Board of Nursing

Instructions for Filing a Complaint

The board derives its legal authority for regulating and enforcing regulations for nursing education, nursing practice, and continuing education for nurses under the provisions of Iowa Code chapters 17A, 147, 152 and 272C. The mission of the board is to protect the public health, safety and welfare by ensuring that nursing is performed by at least minimally competent licensed individuals within their authorized scope of practice.

Iowa law allows the Board of Nursing to investigate licensed nurses (RN, LPN, or ARNP) for alleged wrongful behavior and grants authority to invoke appropriate disciplinary action. Violations of ethical or professional standards may include:

- Abusive behavior; physical or verbal
- Breach of confidentiality issues
- Criminal convictions; misdemeanor or felony
- Misrepresentation
- Negligence
- Scope of practice
- Boundary issues including sexual misconduct
- Substance abuse
- Theft
- Audit Failure
- Nurse licensure compact violation
- Practicing without valid license

If your complaint contains allegations that are not a violation of the Board rules, the Board cannot act. If the allegations appear to violate the rules, your complaint will be processed according to the Board's procedures. [Disciplinary Process](#)

[Who May Make a Complaint to the Iowa Board of Nursing?](#)

If you feel that the nursing care provided to you, a family member or friend has not been satisfactory in some way, you should report your concerns to the Board's enforcement unit. Likewise, if you are a coworker or employer of a nurse and have concerns regarding a nurse's practice or possible substance abuse for example, you should report the matter. The situation will be investigated in order to determine if any rules or laws appear to have been violated. Complaints typically come from patients or their family, friends, the nurses' employer or coworkers.

You may submit your signed Complaint in writing and send to the Enforcement Unit, Iowa Board of Nursing, River Point Business Park, 400 S.W. 8th Street, Suite B, Des Moines, IA 50309-4685; Fax: 515/281-4825. **NOTE: We cannot accept complaints by telephone.**

Reporting a Complaint- Helpful Tips for Patients, Consumers and the Public

The information you provide is helpful in making certain we are able to investigate the matter without any unnecessary delay. Please provide as much of the following information as possible:

- Your name, address and telephone number
- The name of the patient(s) involved if different from your name, including address and telephone number
- The nurse's name
- The nurse's current address and telephone number, if known
- The nurse's license number, if known
- Where does the nurse work? Including address and telephone number
- What happened?
- When did this occur (date/time)?
- Who witnessed this?
- If you are the patient involved in the complaint, or are filing this complaint on behalf of a patient, often it is helpful to our investigation to have your authorization to obtain medical records.

Reporting a Complaint- Helpful Tips for Employers

Delays may be minimized when employers submit the supporting documentation along with a complaint. If you are a Nurse Administrator with a concern, retaining the appropriate documentation and having it available to the Board will facilitate the investigation process. A subpoena may be issued for specific records related to the complaint. Please provide with your complaint, or retain for request by the investigator, as much of the following information as possible:

- Your name, address and telephone number
- The name and address of your facility or place of employment
- The nurse's name
- The nurse's current address and telephone number
- The nurse's license number
- The nurse's personnel record (application, recent performance evaluations, counseling and discipline)
- Where the nurse was working at the time of the incident
- When did the incident occur (date/time)
- Who witnessed the incident
- Relevant patient records: nurse's notes; physician's orders; MAR; narcotic sign-out records
- Incident reports
- Internal facility investigative reports and findings
- Managerial anecdotal notes
- Statements from the nurse, licensee, or other witnesses
- Applicable policies and procedures
- In case of positive drug screens- the lab report, and whether the drug screen was random or for cause, and if for cause, the basis of the drug screen

Disciplinary Process

Information obtained during an investigation will be presented to the board for review and consideration as soon as it is available. If it is determined that the alleged conduct should be addressed through the formal disciplinary process, a hearing will be ordered and the nurse will be served with legal notice of the scheduled event. An opportunity for resolution of the issues through an informal settlement agreement may be proposed prior to the hearing, thereby eliminating the need for formal proceedings.

Nurses named in a Statement of Charges have the option to retain legal counsel, at their own expense, or represent themselves during this process. The board may impose one or more of the following sanctions as disposition in a contested case:

- Revocation
- Suspension
- Probation
- Civil Penalty
- Continuing Education
- Citation and Warning

OVERVIEW OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Please Note: Iowa Administrative Code allows the licensee to have due process until final resolution. The licensee may continue to practice during this process.

We appreciate your patience, as the complaint process can be lengthy. If you have further questions, please review our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) or contact us.

[COMPLAINT FORM](#)

[AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF MEDICAL RECORDS FORM](#)