



**BACKGROUND:** Why are nurses qualified (educated) and authorized (licensed) to practice?

More than 100 years ago, Boards of Nursing were established to protect the public's health by overseeing and assuring the safe practice of nursing.

A license issued by a governmental entity provides assurance to the public that the nurse has met predetermined standards.

Anyone who practices as a nurse must meet the requirements set forth by the requirements for licensure and define the scope of nursing practice Nurse Practice Act (NPA) set in every state as law.

The purpose of a professional license is to protect the public from harm by setting minimal qualifications and competencies for safe entry-level practitioners, with oversight in Illinois by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation and the Board of Nursing.

Nursing is regulated because it is one of the health professions that poses a risk of harm to the public if practiced by someone who is unprepared and/or incompetent.

The public may not have sufficient information and experience to identify an unqualified health care provider and is vulnerable to unsafe and incompetent practitioners. Licensure benefits both the public and the individual nurse by assuring the safe practice of nursing.

[https://www.ncsbn.org/public-files/2017\\_NPA\\_Guide\\_and\\_govern.pdf](https://www.ncsbn.org/public-files/2017_NPA_Guide_and_govern.pdf)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK559012/>

## **ILLINOIS NURSE PRACTICE ACT**

### **LEGISLATIVE PURPOSE Section 50-5**

The practice of professional and practical nursing in the State of Illinois is hereby declared to affect the public health, safety, and welfare and to be subject to regulation and control in the public interest. It is further declared to be a matter of public interest and concern that the practice of nursing, as defined in this Act, merit and receive the confidence of the public and that only **qualified** persons be **authorized** to so practice nursing in the State of Illinois.

To be clear:

- **Qualified** = Educated Completing an approved Board of Nursing program.
- **Authorized** = Licensed. Candidate graduates from approved nursing programs must pass a national nursing exam, National Council of Licensure Examination (NCLEX) to determine if the candidate is ready to become licensed entry level nurse.

<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs4.asp?DocName=022500650HArt%2E+50&ActID=1312&ChapterID=24&SeqStart=13100000&SeqEnd=14800000>