

## Objectives

1. Summarize the structure and function of the legal system.
2. Compare and contrast nursing negligence and malpractice.
3. Discuss the legal relationship that exists between the nurse and the patient.
4. Explain the importance of maintaining standards of care.
5. Give examples of ways the nursing profession is regulated.
6. Give examples of legal issues in health care.
7. Discuss federal regulations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) privacy rule and its impact on the health care system.
8. Give examples of ways the licensed practical/vocational nurse can avoid being involved in a lawsuit.
9. Differentiate between a legal duty and an ethical duty.
10. Explain advance directives.
11. Summarize how culture affects an individual's beliefs, morals, and values.
12. Identify how values affect decision making.
13. Distinguish between ethical and unethical behavior.
14. Explain the meaning of a code of ethics.
15. Explain the nurse's role in reporting unethical behavior.
16. Give examples of ethical issues common in health care.

## Key Terms

**accountability** (ák-kóvnt-á-BL-é-lé, p. 24)

**advocate** (áD-vó-kát, p. 24)

**deposition** (dè-pó-SI-shún, p. 23)

**doctrine of informed consent** (p. 26)

**ethical dilemmas** (ETH-I-ká, p. 34)

**ethics** (ETH-I-ks, p. 31)

**euthanasia** (úth-én-á-zhá, p. 29)

**laws** (p. 22)

**liability** (lI-á-BL-á-té, p. 24)

**liable** (lI-á-té, p. 23)

**malpractice** (p. 22)

**nonmaleficence** (nón-má-LEF-I-sóns, p. 34)

**standards of care** (p. 26)

**value clarification** (p. 33)

**values** (p. 33)

**verdict** (p. 23)

Today's health care system is dynamic and complex. It has undergone significant changes over the decades. Health care providers are guided by established laws, rules, regulations, and ethical principles. The rising cost of health care and growing consumer awareness have had an impact on the practice of nursing and the distribution and use of available health care resources. Additional challenges are presented by the rapid advances in technology and communication. Practice opportunities and settings for the licensed practical/vocational nurse (LPN/LVN) are changing with the focus on managed care, community health, and home health care.

Nursing practice of the LPN/LVN is guided by a combination of legal principles, established laws, moral standards, and ethical principles. Nurses must understand the legal standards and ethical principles that affect practice. Each state has laws that govern the scope and practice of nursing that are referred to as nurse practice acts. The law sets an obligatory minimum standard in any given situation. Ethical principles,

which evolve out of society and culture, frequently impose an even higher duty. These legal standards and ethical principles serve as a support for all members of the health care system and help protect the rights of all members of society.

## LEGAL ASPECTS OF NURSING

The legal relationship that exists between the nurse and the patient is influenced by the existing laws, rules, and regulations that govern nursing practice. Acting outside the established scope of practice or failing to meet the established standard of care has the potential to result in injury to the patient and give rise to legal liability and the potential loss or sanction of the nursing license. Nurses must be aware of their scope of nursing practice and the standards of care that constitute professional duties.

Many legal issues are related to health care, and health care-related litigation that involves nurses is common (Figures 2-1 and 2-2). Today's patients are

# Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals

**D Siedentop**



## **Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals:**

This book delves into Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals. Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals is a vital topic that must be grasped by everyone, from students and scholars to the general public. The book will furnish comprehensive and in-depth insights into Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals, encompassing both the fundamentals and more intricate discussions.

1. The book is structured into several chapters, namely:

- Chapter 1: Introduction to Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
- Chapter 2: Essential Elements of Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
- Chapter 3: Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals in Everyday Life
- Chapter 4: Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals in Specific Contexts
- Chapter 5: Conclusion

2. In chapter 1, this book will provide an overview of Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals. This chapter will explore what Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals is, why Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals is vital, and how to effectively learn about Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals.

3. In chapter 2, the author will delve into the foundational concepts of Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals. The second chapter will elucidate the essential principles that need to be understood to grasp Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals in its entirety.

4. In chapter 3, this book will examine the practical applications of Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals in daily life. This chapter will showcase real-world examples of how Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals can be effectively utilized in everyday scenarios.

5. In chapter 4, this book will scrutinize the relevance of Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals in specific contexts. This chapter will explore how Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals is applied in specialized fields, such as education, business, and technology.

6. In chapter 5, the author will draw a conclusion about Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals. The final chapter will summarize the key points that have been discussed throughout the book.

The book is crafted in an easy-to-understand language and is complemented by engaging illustrations. This book is highly recommended for anyone seeking to gain a comprehensive understanding of Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals.

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## **Table of Contents Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals**

1. Understanding the eBook Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
  - The Rise of Digital Reading Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
  - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
  - Exploring Different Genres
  - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
  - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
  - Popular eBook Platforms
  - Features to Look for in an Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
  - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
  - Personalized Recommendations
  - Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals User Reviews and Ratings
  - Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals and Bestseller Lists
5. Accessing Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals Free and Paid eBooks
  - Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals Public Domain eBooks
  - Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals eBook Subscription Services
  - Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals Budget-Friendly Options
6. Navigating Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals eBook Formats
  - ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
  - Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals Compatibility with Devices
  - Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals Enhanced eBook Features
7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
  - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
  - Highlighting and Note-Taking Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
  - Interactive Elements Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
8. Staying Engaged with Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals

- Joining Online Reading Communities
  - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
  - Following Authors and Publishers Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
- Benefits of a Digital Library
  - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
- Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
  - Minimizing Distractions
  - Managing Screen Time
11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
- Setting Reading Goals Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
  - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
- Fact-Checking eBook Content of Chapter 2 Legal Fundamentals
  - Distinguishing Credible Sources
13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
- Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
  - Exploring Educational eBooks
14. Embracing eBook Trends
- Integration of Multimedia Elements
  - Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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