Advocating for a Unique Nurse Identifier

Policy Recommendation

Developed by the Nursing Knowledge Big Data Science Conference Health IT Policy Workgroup

Why do we need a Unique Nurse Identifier?

1. Nurses and employers need a mechanism to track nursing licensure across job and location changes throughout a nurse's career.

2. Institutions need the ability to verify licensure status for their nurse employees.

3. Hospitals and health systems need the ability to uniquely identify nurses in the electronic health record (EHR) and other health IT systems for documentation, education, research and training purposes.

4. Nursing documentation in the EHR and other health IT systems will increasingly be used to demonstrate nurses' value as healthcare transitions to a value-based reimbursement model.

5. Nursing documentation can also be used to demonstrate nurses' impact on patient and population outcomes, patient safety, operational efficiency and clinical effectiveness.

Background

- The Health IT Policy Workgroup is advocating for use of the unique nurse identifier maintained and supported by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) called the *NCSBN ID*.

- The *NCSBN ID* is a free, unique identifier, publicly available, that is automatically generated for each RN and LPN at the time of their NCLEX exam. No additional action by the nurse is necessary.

- Nurses who received licensure prior to the NCLEX exam have been assigned an *NCSBN ID* through the matching process, and were added to the Nursys database maintained by the NCSBN.

- The Nursys e-Notify® system allows institutions to receive license status including the *NCSBN ID* for their nurses, and electronically tracks each nurse across multiple state licensures.

- While we support the use of the National Provider Identifier (NPI) for RNs who submit claims, multiple barriers and complexities prohibit ease of use of the NPI as the unique nurse identifier, including the need for each RN to take action to apply for an NPI.

Policy Recommendation

- The *NCSBN ID* should be used by key stakeholders as the unique nurse identifier to demonstrate the value of nurses through research and documentation in the EHR and other health IT systems.

Next Steps

- Further action is necessary to determine feasibility of use of the NCSBN ID and to evaluate this recommendation with key stakeholders including the American Nurses Association, the American Academy of Nursing, healthcare provider organizations and health IT vendors.

To learn more about the NCSBN Nursys database visit: **www.nursys.com**