



NORTH CAROLINA RESPIRATORY CARE BOARD

1100 Navaho Drive, Suite 242
Raleigh, NC 27609

January 10, 2013

Kathy Short, RCP
Director, Respiratory Care/Pulmonary Diagnostics Departments
UNC Hospitals
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Dear Ms. Short,

This letter is sent on behalf of the North Carolina Respiratory Care Board in response to your letter of November 30, 2012 requesting the Board's interpretation of provisions in its rules and in the Respiratory Care Practice Act ("the Act") that relate to access to narcotics by Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCP's). In the information that you submitted, you confirmed that the access to narcotics by an RCP referenced in your letter would occur only in a licensed health care facility and after receipt of a physician's order for respiratory care procedures that involve the administration of narcotics, and which are within the scope of practice for an RCP to perform, and which also fall within any licensed operating parameters for the facility concerned.

The Respiratory Care Board discussed your request during its regular scheduled meeting on January 10, 2013 and has determined that there is no provision in the Act or in its rules which prohibits access to narcotics by RCP's for approved respiratory care procedures that 1) have been ordered by a licensed physician; and 2) are within the scope of practice of an RCP.

However, each facility should have policies on who may have access to narcotics and the training and competency reviews required to have such access; and the Board recognizes that neither the Act nor its rules mandates that RCPs be given access to narcotics. Therefore, a facility may adopt a policy which limits access to narcotics by RCPs.

Please advise if you have any other questions about this issue.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Floyd E. Boyer".

Floyd E. Boyer, RRT, RCP
Executive Director