

NEBRASKA BOARD OF MEDICINE & SURGERY

OPINION ON OBSERVERSHIPS IN MEDICINE AND SURGERY

An observer should only participate under supervision of the mentor, and not have any independent responsibilities. The term “observer” used here is not synonymous with a student who has matriculated in a recognized and accredited health career school. The student who is enrolled may participate in a role consistent with the sought after degree, level of education and expertise and knowledge of the patient or guardian.

Any observer in healthcare should:

1. Fully understand and document their willingness to abide by all privacy regulations [HIPAA].
2. Be introduced to the patient and guardian and their role explained. The patient/guardian should express willingness to have the observer present.
3. Not actively participate in patient care. The observer should not participate in the interview process, physical exam, or any procedures.
4. Not be responsible for documentation of the interview, exam or procedures.
5. Only record vague non-identifying information for the purpose of keeping a shadowing log. An example would be “observed the interview and examination of a forty-five year old male with right ankle pain.”

Any person who has successfully completed a training program in either an accredited or non-accredited school should participate only as an observer - not as an active participant - until they have been licensed by the proper board or agency.

Dated May 2, 2014