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**OPINION:** Pericardial Drain Flushing  
**APPROVED DATE:** February 2017  
**REVIEWED DATE:**  
**REVISED DATE:**  
**ORIGINATING COMMITTEE:**  
Practice & Education Committee

An advisory opinion adopted by WSBN is an interpretation of what the law requires. While an advisory opinion is not law, it is more than a recommendation. In other words, an advisory opinion is an official opinion of WSBN regarding the practice of nursing as it relates to the functions of nursing. Facility policies may restrict practice further in their setting and/or require additional expectations related to competency, validation, training and supervision to assure the safety of their patient population and/or decrease risk.

Within the Scope of Practice/Role of \_X\_ APRN \_X\_ RN \_LPN \_CNA

### **ADVISORY OPINION PERICARDIAL FLUSH**

#### **Intent of Advisory Opinion:**

In accordance with W.S. 33-21-122 (c) (iii) of the Wyoming Nursing Practice Act (NPA), the Wyoming State Board of Nursing (WSBN) has approved the following Advisory Opinion on flushing a pericardial drain. The purpose of this opinion is to guide safe practice.

**Introduction:** For the purposes of this advisory opinion, flushing a pericardial drain is a nursing intervention directed by an APRN or physician/physician assistant's order. The practitioner may leave a pericardial catheter in place to drain excess pericardial fluid post surgery. While the pericardial catheter remains in place, a specialty trained nurse may maintain patency by flushing the drain.

*Flushing a pericardial drain is a sterile procedure with medium to high potential risks, including, but not limited to: pericarditis<sup>i</sup>, infection, discomfort, pain, bleeding, inflammation, and/ or reaccumulation of fluid after treatment.<sup>ii</sup> The RN has the right and responsibility to refuse to perform a pericardial flush if they do not have adequate educational preparation or if they determine the patient or facility does not meet the requirements outlined in this Advisory Opinion.*

<sup>i</sup> Pericarditis may lead to death [www.Lippincott Procedures.com](http://www.LippincottProcedures.com)