SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF NURSING

4305 S. Louise Ave., Suite 201; Sioux Falls, SD 57106-3115
605-362-2760 https://www.sdbon.org/

Display of Nursing Credentials

The South Dakota Board of Nursing is authorized by the state of South Dakota, pursuant to SDCL 36-9-1.1, to safeguard life, health and the public welfare; and to protect citizens from unauthorized, unqualified and improper application of nursing practices.

The Board issues opinions as to what constitutes safe nursing practice. The opinions do not have the force and effect of law but serve as guidelines to licensees to engage in safe nursing practice, and are intended to facilitate the delivery of safe, effective nursing care to the public.

Approval Date: July 2001
Revised: November 4, 2025
Editorial Revisions: November 2024

The Board of Nursing has received inquiries from nurses, consumers, and employers about the use of nursing credentials. The following statement is intended to promote clarity and transparency on the use of legal licensure titles and academic degrees held by nurses.

Statement

A person who holds a South Dakota nursing license, or who is practicing using a compact multistate license, shall clearly identify the legal title of the nursing license held when providing care or when advertising services to South Dakota residents. The nurse shall use and display the legal title, or abbreviation of the title, of the license held.

1. The following licensure titles shall be used or displayed:
   - Licensed practical nurse, abbreviated “LPN”
   - Registered nurse, abbreviated “RN”
   - Certified nurse midwife, abbreviated “CNM”
   - Certified nurse practitioner, abbreviated “CNP”
   - Certified registered nurse anesthetist, abbreviated “CRNA”
   - Clinical nurse specialist, abbreviated “CNS”
2. A CNM, CNP, CRNA, and CNS may add the title “advanced practice registered nurse”, abbreviated “APRN”.
3. A licensed nurse may add earned or awarded education degree(s), title of doctor, or certification title(s).

Examples of how a nurse should display titles:

- Mary Smith, LPN
- Mary Smith, RN, BSN
- Mary Smith, CNM, APRN
- Mary Smith, RN, PhD
- Dr. Mary Smith, CNP, DNP, FNP-BC

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Applicable South Dakota Law

1. SDCL 36-2-3. Use of word "doctor" as evidence of practice--Basic science certificate required
2. SDCL 36-2-5. Persons holding academic degrees exempt
3. SDCL 36-9-2. Evidence of qualification and license required to practice nursing
4. SDCL 36-9-36. Title used by licensed registered nurse or certified registered nurse anesthetist
5. SDCL 36-9-44. Title used by licensed practical nurse
6. SDCL 36-9-88. Title used by clinical nurse specialist
7. SDCL 36-9A-11. Title used by certified nurse practitioner and certified nurse midwife