



# **STANDARDS FOR NURSING PRACTICE – Registered Nurses**

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\*Throughout the document the term “RN”, “Nurse” or “Nursing Practice” refers to Registered Nurse

## **Introduction**

The College of Registered Nurses of Prince Edward Island (CRNPEI) is legislated by the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA, 2013) to develop the standards for nursing practice to ensure safe nursing care for the citizens of PEI. The Canadian Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses (2017)* and the documents listed below, direct nursing practice:

- *RHPA Registered Nurses Regulations (2018)*
- *CRNPEI Nurse Practitioner Standards of Practice (2012)*
- *CRNPEI Nurse Practitioner Core Competencies (2012)*
- *Entry-Level Competencies for Nurse Practitioners in Canada (2016)*
- *CRNPEI Entry-Level Competencies for Registered Nurses (2015-2019)*

The above documents contain references to the attributes of a standard. Other documents and initiatives produced by CRNPEI such as practice directives, fact sheets, information sheets and programs to promote the ability of its members to respond to emerging issues can serve as additional resources to guide practice.

The standards of practice for registered nurses serve a number of purposes:

- protect the public through the regulation of safe, competent, and ethical RNs
- provide a guide to the knowledge, skills, judgment and attitudes that are needed to practice safely
- describe what each nurse is responsible and accountable for in practice
- represent performance criteria against which the practice of all registered nurses is measured
- assist RNs to understand and work through issues related to their professional practice
- provide direction for administration, quality management, and performance expectations pertinent to RNs
- inform the public, and other members of the health team about the practice of nursing and help create accurate expectations of the profession
- guide curriculum development and approval of the basic nursing education and the Nurse Practitioner (NP) program
- establish a context for the development of research questions that lead to the improvement of nursing practice and health care
- help the legal profession interpret RN accountability and provide a legal reference for reasonable, prudent, RN practice

## **What is the Basis for the Standards for Nursing Practice?**

Standards for nursing practice are based on the following philosophy and principles:

- the client is the central focus of the professional service nurses provide, and is a partner in the decision-making process and ultimately makes his or her own decisions
- improvement is a necessary component of practice, and the public interest is best served when nurses continually improve their application of knowledge, skill and judgment
- the public has entrusted CRNPEI to honour the social contract that we have made with Canadians to act in the public interest through the licensing and regulation of its members
- quality practice settings contribute to the provision of competent and professional service

- the goal of professional nursing service is the outcome desired by the client that poses no unnecessary exposure of risk of harm

### **Definition of Terms**

**Standard:** An authoritative statement that sets out the legal and professional basis of nursing practice.

- The primary purpose of standards is to identify for nurses, the public, government, and other stakeholders, the desired and achievable level of performance expected of nurses in their practice, against which actual performance can be measured.

Five standards form the foundation of the CRNPEI *Standards for Nursing Practice* in addition to the *CNA Code of Ethics*.

- Unique Body of Knowledge
- Competent Application of Knowledge
- Responsibility and Accountability
- Advocacy
- Continuing Competence

**Indicator:** An illustration of how a standard can be applied in a specific dimension of practice:

- The indicators in this document are not written in order of importance, nor are they an all inclusive list
- All indicators may not apply to a nurse's practice at all times
- The indicators are not meant to describe specialty practice for clinical, education, administration or research. Other indicators may be developed in specialty settings which more clearly articulate expectations
- Although indicators vary with the situation and the context of the nurse's role, it is assumed that all nurses will meet the expectations of the *Standards for Nursing Practice*. Therefore, it is expected that nurses will be able to describe how, in their practice, the nursing practice standards are met
- The indicators reflect four overall concepts that are central to professional practice: communication, leadership, critical inquiry, and legal and professional requirements

**Client:** Reflects the range of individuals and/or groups with whom nurses interact:

- Client as the recipient of nursing services is defined as individuals, families, groups, communities or populations
- In some settings other terms may be used such as patient or resident
- In education, the client may also be a student or learner; in administration, the client may also be an employee; and in research the client is usually a subject or participant

## **CNA Code of Ethics**

The nurse in practice will demonstrate adherence to, understanding and promotion of the ethical standards of the profession as stated in the 2017 Edition, Canadian Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*.

**Each nurse** demonstrates compliance with the Code of Ethics of the profession around the seven primary values that are central to ethical nursing practice:

- **Providing Safe, Compassionate, Competent and Ethical Care**  
Nurses provide safe, compassionate, competent and ethical care.
- **Promoting Health and Well-Being**  
Nurses work with people to enable them to attain their highest possible level of health and well-being.
- **Promoting and Respecting Informed Decision-Making**  
Nurses recognize, respect and promote a person's right to be informed and make decisions.
- **Honouring Dignity**  
Nurses recognize and respect the intrinsic worth of each person.
- **Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality**  
Nurses recognize the importance of privacy and confidentiality and safeguard personal, family and community information obtained in the context of a professional relationship.
- **Promoting Justice**  
Nurses uphold principles of justice by safeguarding human rights, equity and fairness and by promoting the public good.
- **Being Accountable**  
Nurses are accountable for their actions and answerable for their practice.
- **In addition, a nurse in an ADMINISTRATOR role:**
  - (a) Promotes and initiates measures to create practice environments that support client advocacy, promote collaboration and respect, and enable nurses to meet their ethical obligations.
  - (b) Creates environments that promote and support ethical practice.
  - (c) Upholds and supports others to uphold the values contained in the CNA Code of Ethics.
  - (d) Consistently practices and supports others to practice according to the ethical responsibilities within the CNA Code of Ethics.
- **In addition, a nurse in an EDUCATOR role:**  
Encourages and supports critical thinking and dialogue about ethical issues.

- **In addition, a nurse in a RESEARCHER role:**
  - (a) Ensures research is based on appropriate ethical codes for the use of human and animal subjects.
  - (b) Participates in the ongoing ethical review of research.

## **STANDARD 1 - Unique Body of Knowledge**

Each nurse possesses and continually strives to improve upon the specialized body of knowledge based on nursing science relevant to area of nursing practice.

### **Indicators**

#### **Each nurse:**

- 1.1** Has appropriate theoretical knowledge and skills as needed in her/his area of practice.
- 1.2** Utilizes theoretical knowledge as a basis for nursing practice.
- 1.3** Knows how and where to find needed information.
- 1.4** Recognizes the various nursing roles and their relationship to one another.
- 1.5** Assists clients, colleagues, students, other professionals and the public to acquire new knowledge.
- 1.6** Presents an informed view of the nursing profession and its relationship to the health care system to clients, colleagues, students, other professionals and the public.
- 1.7** **In addition, a nurse in an ADMINISTRATOR role:**
  - (a) Creates practice environments that support ongoing professional development.
  - (b) Knows where and how to find needed information to support the provision of safe, appropriate ethical practice.
  - (c) Shares nursing knowledge with clients, colleagues, students and others.
  - (d) Interprets and uses current evidence from research and other credible sources to make administrative decisions.
  - (e) Creates an environment in which cooperation, professional growth and mutual respect can flourish.
- 1.8** **In addition, a nurse in an EDUCATOR role:**

Provides a learning environment that supports professional development and life-long learning.
- 1.9** **In addition, a nurse in a RESEARCHER role:**

Promotes the identification of current research findings and integration into practice.

## **STANDARD 2 - Competent Application of Knowledge**

Each nurse demonstrates competency relevant to area of nursing practice.

### **Indicators**

#### **Each nurse:**

- 2.1** Uses comprehensive assessment, critical inquiry, technology, and research to provide competent nursing services relevant to the area of practice.
- 2.2** Uses current theoretical knowledge and professional judgment, critical inquiry and reflection in making decisions and implements actions relevant to the needs of the client and area of practice.
- 2.3** Uses communication processes to establish, maintain and conclude therapeutic and professional relationships.
- 2.4** Designs and develops action plans to address client's needs in collaboration with the client and relevant others.
- 2.5** Coordinates human resources and manages physical resources to promote quality services.
- 2.6** Documents assessment, nursing activities, and client outcomes in an accurate, timely and thorough manner.
- 2.7** Performs planned interventions in accordance with appropriate policies, procedures and service standards.
- 2.8** Participates in initiatives that promote quality nursing and health care.
- 2.9** Uses current literature/research and performance indicators to support direct practice.
- 2.10 In addition, a nurse in an ADMINISTRATOR role:**
  - (a) Collects information about organizational status from a variety of sources using assessment skills including observation and communication.
  - (b) Identifies, analyzes and uses relevant and valid information when determining organizational problems.
  - (c) Promotes and contributes to practice environments that encourage learning, application of nursing knowledge and research, and efficient use of resources.
  - (d) Establishes and maintains communication to support quality service and research.
- 2.11 In addition, a nurse in an EDUCATOR role:**
  - (a) Promotes and initiates measures to create a learning environment that supports ongoing opportunities to obtain and maintain competencies relevant to the area of practice.
  - (b) Promotes a learning environment conducive to ongoing demonstration and evaluation of competencies.
  - (c) Provides feedback to colleagues and students to encourage professional growth and advance nursing practice.

- (d) Assists colleagues and students in the development of life-long learning skills.
- (e) Integrates evidenced-based theory and best practices into educational activities.
- (f) Critically analyzes and evaluates nursing practice and education.

**2.12 In addition, a nurse in a RESEARCHER role:**

- (a) Promotes and evaluates practice through research.
- (b) Facilitates involvement of others in the research process.
- (c) Ensures high standards are used in the research process.
- (d) Disseminates research findings formally and informally.
- (e) Promotes and contributes to environments that encourage the application of research findings to professional practice.
- (f) Secures resources to answer research questions.

### **STANDARD 3 - Responsibility and Accountability**

Each nurse demonstrates responsibility and accountability to the public by providing competent, safe and ethical nursing practice.

#### **Indicators**

##### **Each nurse:**

- 3.1** Maintains current licensure.
- 3.2** Practices in accordance with the RHPA and its Regulations and Bylaws; the CRNPEI *Standards for Nursing Practice*; the CNA *Code of Ethics*; other relevant CRNPEI documents; other relevant Acts and legislation; and individual competence and ability to evaluate own practice.
- 3.3** Has the current knowledge, skill and judgment needed to practice in her or his setting.
- 3.4** Is responsible and accountable for her/his actions and decisions at all times.
- 3.5** Exercises reasonable judgment in decision making.
- 3.6** Follows established policies and procedures.
- 3.7** Participates in developing health policies and procedures which guide nursing practice.
- 3.8** Responds to and reports situations which may be adverse for clients and/or health care providers, including incompetence, misconduct and incapacity of registered nurses and/or other health care providers.
- 3.9 In addition, a nurse in an ADMINISTRATOR role:**
  - (a) Maintains a standard of personal health and safety such that the ability to practice is not compromised.
  - (b) Participates in the identification and resolution of professional practice issues, conflicts, and ethical dilemmas.
- 3.10 In addition, a nurse in an EDUCATOR role:**
  - (a) Promotes learning opportunities for students to enable them to acquire the knowledge, skill and clinical experience to practice competently.
  - (b) Promotes evaluation and ensures learning outcomes for students.
  - (c) Promotes and initiates measures to create a learning environment that supports professional accountability.
- 3.11 In addition, a nurse in a RESEARCHER role:**
  - (a) Ensures ethical guidelines are followed so that research participants are protected.

## **STANDARD 4 - Advocacy**

Each nurse demonstrates advocacy for clients in their relationship with the health system by responding to their needs in a way that supports, protects and safeguards the client's rights and interests.

### **Indicators**

#### **Each nurse:**

- 4.1** Acts as an advocate to protect and promote a clients' right to self-determination, autonomy, respect, privacy, dignity and access to information.
- 4.2** Assists clients in the expression of individual needs, values and choices (e.g. cultural beliefs, sexual orientation, age and gender) and ensures that the client's perspective is made known so as to provide appropriate services.
- 4.3** Shares relevant information with clients regarding health and refers the client to other sources for information when appropriate.
- 4.4** Supports the client to make informed decisions regarding health.
- 4.5** Develops and sustains collaborative partnerships with clients, colleagues, health providers and the public, which promote advocacy.
- 4.6** Supports the development and implementation of policies which ensure the client's rights are respected.
- 4.7** Communicates, collaborates and consults with nurses and other members of the health team about the provision of health care services.
- 4.8 In addition, a nurse in an ADMINISTRATOR role:**
  - (a) Promotes a practice environment that supports client advocacy.
  - (b) Uses information to ensure that human and other resources are used efficiently to maintain client safety.
  - (c) Advocates and develops policies that clearly outline the responsibility and accountability for all involved in assignment and delegation.
  - (d) Supports staff and others in the planning and delivery of health care services as appropriate.
- 4.9 In addition, a nurse in an EDUCATOR role:**

Promotes a learning environment that supports client advocacy.
- 4.10 In addition, a nurse in a RESEARCHER role:**
  - (a) Utilizes ethical guidelines to ensure the protection of participants.
  - (b) Ensures that participants are supported and informed through-out the research process.

## **STANDARD 5 - Continuing Competence**

Each nurse demonstrates responsibility for maintaining competence, fitness to practice and integrating new knowledge and skills in own area of practice.

### **Indicators**

#### **Each nurse:**

- 5.1** Maintains and enhances current knowledge by investing time, effort, or other resources to attain the knowledge and skills required for practice.
- 5.2** Models commitment to continuing competence through life-long learning, reflective practice and integration of learning into practice.
- 5.3** Seeks out and uses feedback from others in assessing own practice and provides feedback to others to support their professional development.
- 5.4** Uses relevant knowledge of changing trends in nursing, health, society, and the environment to advance/improve practice.
- 5.5** Demonstrates theoretical knowledge related to own practice area.
- 5.6** Applies problem-solving processes in decision-making and evaluates these processes.
- 5.7** Demonstrates competence in skills related to own practice area.
- 5.8** Assesses personal competence and assumes responsibility in meeting own professional learning needs and assumes responsibility to acquire knowledge and skills to improve personal practice.
- 5.9** Shares knowledge with clients, colleagues, health care providers and the public.
- 5.10** Has knowledge of changing trends in nursing, health and society that impact on own practice.
- 5.11** Practices within own level of competence.
- 5.12 In addition, a nurse in an ADMINISTRATOR role:**
  - (a) Promotes a practice environment that supports continuous professional development of competent nursing practice.
  - (b) Actively participates in quality improvement activities and seeks input from consumers related to nursing care provided.
- 5.13 In addition, a nurse in an EDUCATOR role:**
  - (a) Promotes a learning environment that supports continuous professional development of competent nursing practice.
  - (b) Provides feedback to colleagues and consumers about practice and learning.
- 5.14 In addition, a nurse in a RESEARCHER role:**

Promotes the identification and integration of research findings into the practice environment.

## REFERENCES

Appreciation is extended for permission to use parts of the following documents:

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