

Practice Directive

Collaborative Practice

College of Registered Nurses of Prince Edward
Island

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Background

Many Registered Nurses (RN) work within multidisciplinary teams while providing care to clients in a variety of clinical settings. RNs must understand the role of other regulated health workers as well as the job descriptions of any unregulated health workers (UHW) within their worksite.

The purpose of this practice directive is to guide the RN in collaborative practice.

Scope of Practice vs Scope of Employment

Scope of practice differs from scope of employment. A regulated health professional's scope of practice is derived from the following:

- Legislation (Registered Nurses Regulations)
- Education
- Personal Experience
- Individual Competencies

In PEI the Registered Nurses Regulations outline the *Reserved Activities* that any RN holding a registration in PEI is legally entitled to perform. However, an individual RN must also consider their education, personal experiences and individual competencies before performing any *Reserved Activity* or related skill. For example, the insertion of a Central Vascular Access Device is within the scope of practice of an RN, in order to perform this task, an RN must have additional education/training, experience, and have been deemed competent in this skill.

An employer will determine the scope of employment for both regulated and unregulated health workers. Employers outline the scope of employment through job descriptions, policies and procedures. The scope of employment cannot be outside of a regulated health professional's scope of practice or beyond the education received by a UHW.

Scope of employment may be role or area specific. For example, a nurse working in a particular clinical area of a hospital has the authorization to administer specific medications using the IV "push" method. If that same nurse was to float to a different clinical area within the hospital, this practice may not be authorized in the other clinical area.

Collaborative Practice

Collaborative practice is when two or more autonomous health care providers work together for a common goal. Registered Nurses may need to collaborate with other regulated health care professionals and UHWs in order to provide care to clients. When all members of the health care team are empowered to work together within their respective scopes of practice, scopes of employment, and competencies it leads to a supportive care environment.

There are skills and activities that several different health care providers have the ability to perform. For example, a bed bath is a shared skill of RNs, LPNs, and UHWs. While all three groups have the ability to complete the task of a bed bath, not everyone has the knowledge and ability to assess a client's needs and care during the bath. This influences who should complete the task. This decision is fluid and may change from day-to-day or hour-to-hour. For example, a RN may perform the bed

bath on day one post-op but an unregulated health provider may be able to perform the task on day five post-op.

Delegation and Assignment

A reserved activity is an activity that could cause significant risk or harm to the public if performed by someone without the required competence and skill. The Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) lists the specific reserved activities that each regulated health profession can perform.

Delegation is the transfer of the nurse's responsibility for the performance of a task to another nursing staff member or other member of the multidisciplinary team while retaining accountability for the outcome. Delegation of reserved activities is not permitted within the legislation on Prince Edward Island. This means that a RN cannot transfer the responsibility of performing a task to another member of the multidisciplinary team while retaining accountability for the outcome.

Assignment is the allocation of duties to individuals whose scope of practice or scope of employment allows the performance of these duties (Nova Scotia College of Nursing, 2022). This would be the situation when an RN is being a team leader and assigning duties to other nurses and members of the health care team. The team leader would only be able to assign tasks if the other member of the health care team are permitted to perform them. The individual accepting the assignment is accountable for the outcomes of their actions as they fall within their scope of practice or employment.

Guidelines

Registered Nurses...

1. ensure that client centered care is a priority.
2. are accountable and responsible for their own practice and are expected to follow the requirements of legislation, regulations, and the CRNMPEI standards.
3. practice within their own individual level of competence and seek additional guidance when needed.
4. must be familiar with the scope of practice and scope of employment of the other regulated health care workers and the scope of employment and competencies of unregulated health workers.
5. trust and respect the roles and expertise of each member of the health care team and work with others to provide care in the best interest of the client.
6. use effective communication skills to share information with all members of the health care team and engages in shared decision making.
7. demonstrates leadership and promotes team building within the health care team and takes the opportunity to share their expertise with others.

(College of Registered Nurses of Alberta, 2019)

Documentation

The person who performs the task is responsible to document according to documentation standards.

Conclusion

Collaborative practice is based on a foundation of client-centered care, open communication, mutual trust, shared decision-making and accountability. Respect and value of the knowledge and experience of each member of the health care team is vital.

References

College of Registered Nurses of Alberta. (2019). *Collaborative practice in nursing*. Accessed on October 3, 2023 from <https://www.nurses.ab.ca/media/reupufcn/collaborative-practice-in-nursing-oct-2019.pdf>

Nova Scotia College of Nursing. (2022). *Assignment and delegation: Guideline for nurses*. Accessed on October 3, 2023 from https://cdn3.nscn.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/Assignment_Delegation.pdf