



COLLEGE OF NURSES OF ONTARIO'S Employer Reference Group

CNO News to Use December 2023

Regulatory changes

RN Prescribing

Registered Nurses (RNs) in Ontario have the option to expand their scope of practice under the *Nursing Act, 1991*, to [prescribe specific medication](#) and communicate diagnoses for the purpose of prescribing those medications.

In December, CNO Council reviewed and approved RN prescribing education programs. RNs who wish to prescribe must complete Council approved [RN prescribing education](#). CNO Council also approved the new [RN Prescribing](#) practice standard. The new practice standard expands on the accountabilities found in the *Medication, Scope of Practice* and the *Code of Conduct* practice standards. RNs are expected to practice in compliance with all relevant legislation, the standards of practice of the profession and applicable employer policies.

Some practice environments may not allow RN prescribing. For example, the *Public Hospitals Act* prevents RNs who are employed by a hospital from prescribing. In addition, some employer policies may not permit RNs to prescribe in a specific setting. RNs who are considering expanding their scope to prescribe should consult with their employers to confirm if RN prescribing will be supported in the practice setting. It is equally critical that employers who plan to enable RN prescribing consult nurses and put the necessary supports in place to roll it out safely.

The amendments to the regulation also include changes to medication practices for all nurses. The *Medication, Scope of Practice* and *Nurse Practitioner* standard have been updated to reflect the new regulation change. Nurses are encouraged to review the following standards as the updates may impact their practice:

- [Medication](#) standard includes new dispensing label requirements and new practice requirements for nurses when dispensing or administering medication by injection or inhalation (updated version available after December 15th),
- [Scope of Practice](#) standard includes additional clarity to permit RNs and RPNs to dispense or administer by injection or inhalation certain medications if ordered by RNs with prescribing authority (updated version available after December 15th),

- [Nurse Practitioner](#) standard includes removal of certain conditions that only applied to NPs when dispensing medication (updated version available after December 15th).

To support this scope expansion and system change, CNO has developed new resources, such as [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and the [RN Prescribing Decision Tree](#). In addition, webinars will be held in the new year to support nurses interested in becoming authorized to prescribe. For more information on [RN prescribing](#), visit cno.org.

Annual Membership Renewal

Annual Member Renewal is now open! Make sure your nursing staff renew their membership with CNO for 2024 by the end of this year (Sunday, Dec. 31 at 11:59 p.m.). All nurses must be registered with CNO to practice in Ontario. Employers that hire nurses are expected to check [Find a Nurse](#) to confirm a nurse's ability to practice in Ontario. Nurses who need support with renewal, can visit CNO's renewal [FAQ page](#) or contact us for [renewal support](#).

Nurse Renewal Check

Nurse Renewal Check is a service provided by CNO for nursing employers, facility operators or anyone else who needs to know the membership status of nurses they employ or plan to hire on a full-time, part-time, casual, or contractual basis quickly and efficiently checked. This service will launch in January 2024 so employers can confirm if a nurse has renewed their registration and remains eligible to practice in Ontario. This CNO service is free of charge and ideal for organizations that employ many nurses. For more information about the Nurse Renewal Check service, please go to [Nurse Renewal Check](#).

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) Update

With the anticipated federal changes to MAID legislation to include mental health disorders, CNO has been reviewing and updating existing resources to inform nurse's roles when supporting MAID. A National Practice Standard Task Group released a [Model Practice Standard for MAID](#) in March 2023. We are currently reviewing and adapting this work into CNO's existing [Guidance on Nurses' Roles in Medical Assistance in Dying](#). The new guidance document and supporting resources will be released in 2024 to align with anticipated changes to the MAID legislation.

The focus of this work will be to ensure Nurse Practitioners who are involved with MAID as assessors or providers are supported for this change in practice. For those employers who facilitate MAID and have an interest in sharing feedback on the revised guideline, please contact Allyson Nowell at anowell@cnomail.org.

Annual Practice Resources Update

Each year we review our online practice resources to ensure content is relevant and applicable to current nursing practice. As a result, below is a summary of the changes and revisions made to our [web resources](#) in 2023:

Updated Standards

- [RN Prescribing](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Scope of Practice](#)

New/Updated Ask Practice FAQs

- [Administering, Distributing and Teaching the Use of Naloxone](#)
- [Assigning, Supervising or Teaching an Activity](#)
- [Electronic Documentation](#)
- [Nurses Working in Different Roles](#)
- [Providing Virtual Care](#)
- [Teaching an Unregulated Care provider](#)
- [Use of Educational Credentials](#)
- [Nursing Accountabilities When Working with Robotics](#)

Temporary Changes

- Refusing Assignments and Discontinuing Nursing Services Guideline (removed temporarily, please refer to [Refusing Assignments Ask Practice FAQ](#))
- [Telepractice](#) (interim document)

Retired Standards/Guidelines

- Decisions About Procedures and Authority
- Ethics
- Professional Standards
- RN and RPN Practice: The Client, the Nurse and the Environment
- Authorizing Mechanisms
- RHPA: Scope of Practice, Controlled Acts Model

Lastly, all COVID-19 resources are now under [Pandemic Planning](#).

Quality Assurance

CNO has updated the [Quality Assurance \(QA\) Program](#) to support greater relevancy to everyday nursing practice and increase the reach of the program. We have implemented a more user-friendly technology platform and process improvements to better support nurses completing the QA Assessment. The program had a successful soft launch of the new approach this summer and have commenced another QA Assessment cycle in October with a larger number of nurses randomly selected to participate.

You can find our QA resources and access the updated Learning Plan template on CNO's [QA webpage](#). More changes to the program will be coming in 2024. Please continue to monitor

[CNO.org](https://cno.org) for updates. If selected for QA Assessment, nurses will be contacted by email, using the email on file in MYM. Please remind your nursing staff to keep their email and contact information up to date. If you have any questions, please email us at QAassessment@CNOmail.org.

Questions?

If you have any questions about this issue of CNO News to Use or nursing practice, please contact CNO's Practice Quality team by completing [an online form](#).

CNO's Practice Quality team also supports employers with collaborative presentations about the Standards of Practice and applying them to your specific practice setting and requests can be made through the [online form](#).