



Nurse Practitioner Practice Standards

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Acknowledgment

This Nurse Practitioner (NP) Practice Standards document was developed through a collaborative working group comprised of representatives from the College of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan (CRNS) and the Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB).

In addition, CRNS and NANB partners, including NPs, educators, advisory committees, council, government, and employers were consulted in developing this document. NP Practice Standards are reviewed every five years or as required to reflect current and new developments in NP practice.

Introduction

This document is intended to identify the Practice Standards for NPs registered to practice in Saskatchewan. A standard is an expected and achievable level of professional practice performance. The NP Practice Standards inform practitioners in making safe and effective decisions in their nursing practice.

Regulatory Authority

The CRNS is a profession-led regulatory body established in 1917 by the provincial legislature. The CRNS is accountable for public protection through [The Registered Nurses Act, 1988](#) (the Act), ensuring registrants are safe, competent, and ethical practitioners. The Act provides the legislative authority for NP practice in Saskatchewan. One of the ways CRNS fulfills its mandate is by establishing the practice standards for CRNS registrants. NP registrants comply with the [Registered Nurse Practice Standards](#), [NP Practice Standards](#), [NP Entry-Level Competencies \(ELC\)](#), and the Canadian Nurses Association's (CNA) [Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses](#).

Nurse Practitioner Practice

An NP is a Registered Nurse (RN) with additional graduate-level nursing education providing in-depth knowledge and clinical expertise. Within their legislated scope of practice, the NP autonomously diagnoses common medical disorders, orders and interprets diagnostic tests, prescribes pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions, dispenses pharmaceuticals, and performs procedures. As advanced practice nurses, NPs use their knowledge, skill, judgment, and experience to analyze, synthesize, and apply evidence to make decisions. NPs apply theory and knowledge from nursing and other disciplines to provide a comprehensive range of essential services grounded in professional, ethical, and legal standards within a holistic model of care. NP practice can be clinically focused and include other practice domains such as education, administration, policy, and research. The NP provides leadership and collaborates with health care professionals within and across communities, organizations, and populations to improve health and health system outcomes.

Overview: Practice Standards and Indicators

Practice Standards

The Practice Standards are broad, principle-based statements supporting various population health needs and evolving health care systems, enabling advanced and autonomous NP practice. The NP Practice Standards establish the regulatory and professional foundation for NP practice and identify the expected level of performance of an NP. All NP standards are equally important, interrelated, and apply across the lifespan in all practice settings and domains. The NP is responsible for understanding and practicing in accordance with the NP Practice Standards for safe, competent, compassionate, and ethical practice.

The NP Practice Standards:

- apply to all NPs registered to practice in Saskatchewan;
- guide NP practice in addition to the RN Practice Standards;
- protect the public by setting expectations for safe, competent, compassionate, and ethical NP practice;
- inform the public and others about what they can expect from practicing NPs;
- provide guidance to support continued competence;
- may be used in conjunction with other resources to guide NP practice;
- inform decision-making for practice and when addressing professional practice issues;
- are used as a legal reference for reasonable and prudent practice; and,
- may be used to develop position descriptions, performance appraisals and quality improvement tools.

The standards that apply to NP practice include:

- Standard 1: Professional Responsibility and Accountability
- Standard 2: Knowledge-Based Practice
- Standard 3: Advanced Clinical Practice
- Standard 4: Professional Relationships, Leadership, and Advocacy

The client (individual, family, group, community, or population) is central to each standard and NP practice. It is important to note that no agency directive (policy, procedure, or guideline) can relieve an NP of professional accountability for their actions or decisions regarding the *NP Practice Standards*.

Indicators

Indicators support each of the NP Practice Standards by further describing how each standard is to be met or applied in practice.

The indicators:

- are interrelated;
- provide specific criteria against which actual performance is measured;
- may be further interpreted based on the contexts of practice;
- may be interpreted to describe further the practice expectations of NPs of varying levels of competence, ranging from entry-level to advanced level; and,
- are not written in order of importance or intended to be an exhaustive list of criteria for each standard.

Practice Standards for Nurse Practitioners

Standard 1 - Professional Responsibility and Accountability

The NP is responsible and accountable for their practice and professional conduct.

The NP:

1.1 Maintains current registration to practice as an NP and complies with regulatory requirements.

1.2 Practices in accordance with:

- applicable federal and provincial legislation;
- the Act, CRNS Bylaws, CRNS *RN Practice Standards* and *NP Practice Standards*, *NP ELCs*, and CRNS guidelines;
- the CNA's *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*; and,
- agency policy.

1.3 Attains, maintains, and enhances competence within own NP practice.

1.4 Understands the role and relationship of the regulatory body to NP practice.

1.5 Prescribes to family members, friends, and personal acquaintances only in urgent or emergent situations when no other prescriber is available; and does not self-prescribe.

1.6 Arranges appropriate follow-up of test results, implements reliable systems for test results to be received and communicated in a timely manner, and works with organizations to implement reporting systems.

1.7 Assists in developing and authorizing RN Clinical Protocols to support RN Specialty Practices.

Standard 2 - Knowledge-Based Practice

The NP integrates and applies a broad range of advanced theoretical and evidence-based knowledge to support safe, competent, and ethical NP practice.

The NP:

2.1 Integrates in-depth knowledge from nursing and other disciplines, critical inquiry, research, and clinical expertise to maintain evidence-informed NP practice.

2.2 Integrates qualitative and quantitative data from credible sources to make evidence-informed decisions and to initiate and manage change.

2.3 Assesses, identifies, and critically analyzes information from various sources to establish health trends and patterns.

2.4 Contributes to, leads, and evaluates the application of knowledge in advanced nursing practice.

2.5 Evaluates the historical, political, economic, and social systems impacting health and participates in improving global health, health equity, and health outcomes.

Standard 3 - Advanced Clinical Practice

The NP applies advanced knowledge, skill, and judgment to assess, diagnose, and manage client care in accordance with client needs and evidence-informed practice.

The NP:

- 3.1 Conducts an appropriate client assessment to inform clinical decision-making.
- 3.2 Orders, performs, and interprets screening/diagnostic investigations and explains the rationale for ordering, the associated risks, and the benefits to the client.
- 3.3 Formulates diagnoses based on advanced clinical inquiry, clinical findings, and diagnostic reasoning.
- 3.4 Communicates assessment findings, diagnoses, anticipated outcomes, treatment options and prognosis to the client and other health care professionals.
- 3.5 Collaborates with the client to develop an individualized plan of care based on assessment, diagnosis, and evidence-informed practice.
- 3.6 Provides education and counsels the client on pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions.
- 3.7 Obtains and documents the client's informed consent prior to interventions and as required.
- 3.8 Performs invasive and non-invasive interventions.
- 3.9 Provides counselling for clinical management and prevention of disease, injuries, disorders, or conditions.
- 3.10 Provides accurate, complete, and relevant prescriptions/orders based on client history, current evidence, clinical reasoning, and information systems.
- 3.11 Incorporates harm-reduction strategies into client care.
- 3.12 Participates in required provincial monitoring programs.
- 3.13 Establishes a plan for follow-up and demonstrates the evaluation of responses to pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical interventions and revises the plan of care.
- 3.14 Collaborates, consults, and/or refers to other health care professionals when required, by the diagnosis and/or treatment plan, or when the client care needs are beyond the legislated scope of NP practice and/or beyond the individual NP competence.
- 3.15 Provides consultations and accepts referrals as appropriate from other health care professionals.
- 3.16 Documents all pertinent findings and client outcomes.
- 3.17 Utilizes and evaluates mechanisms and processes to prevent prescription fraud and/or drug diversion.

Standard 4 - Professional Relationships, Leadership, and Advocacy

The NP engages in professional collaboration, leadership, and advocacy to influence and support health care and health care reform and to achieve optimal outcomes in client care, nursing research, nursing education, health policy, and health systems.

The NP:

- 4.1 Leads the coordination and supports implementation of primary health care efforts at local, national, and global levels.
- 4.2 Collaborates and proactively develops and sustains partnerships and networks to influence and improve health, outcomes, and health care delivery.
- 4.3 Applies advanced research methodology to improve client and system outcomes.
- 4.4 Identifies and implements research-based innovations for improving client care, organizations, and systems.
- 4.5 Engages and demonstrates leadership in research activities to explore, evaluate, advance, and disseminate evidence to support knowledge translation.
- 4.6 Designs, implements, and evaluates approaches, services, and programs in response to health services and health system issues.
- 4.7 Engages in designing, implementing, and evaluating digital health technology, services, and processes.
- 4.8 Develops, implements, and evaluates initiatives, programs, and policies that support equitable access to care and foster equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- 4.9 Leads, develops, and contributes to quality improvement and educational initiatives to improve client, organization, and system outcomes.
- 4.10 Applies leadership models to lead intraprofessional and interprofessional teams in health care services and nursing education.
- 4.11 Leads, implements, and evaluates health promotion and disease prevention strategies and initiatives.
- 4.12 Contributes to developing initiatives and policies that promote antiracism, health equity, and social justice in health care.
- 4.13 Develops services in response to client needs, considering epidemiological, cultural, demographical, social, legal, ethical, political, and professional trends and developments.
- 4.14 Proactively assesses and mitigates risk by generating solutions that may lead to practice innovations.
- 4.15 Advocates for improved access to health care by promoting the NP role to nurses and other health professionals, the public, employers, legislators, and policymakers.
- 4.16 Demonstrates leadership in formal and informal education and mentorship to enhance and support the professional development of others.

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