



NSCN has received inquiries about the authority for nurse practitioners (NPs) to “admit” individuals to long term care facilities (nursing homes and residential care facilities) and/or write admission orders for new residents. This information is intended to clarify the NP role in caring for individuals in long term care.

Nursing homes are intended for medically-stable individuals who required more nursing care and supervision than can be provided in their home. Residential care facilities provide individuals with personal care, supervision and accommodation in a safe and supportive environment when nursing care is not required.

Long term care facilities are not considered hospitals under the *Hospitals Act*¹ and fall under the jurisdiction of the *Homes for Special Care Act*. NPs may participate in any phase of the application process to long term care, including the completion of Medical Status Reports. Decisions regarding placement into a long term care facility are made based on an assessment carried out by the Nova Scotia Health Authority Continuing Care Coordinators and are authorized by the long term care administrator, or another designated staff member of the facility.

Completing the initial assessment and orders for care (e.g. diet, medication, activities, treatments, etc.) when a new resident arrives at a long term care facility falls within the NP scope of practice and there are no legislative barriers to NPs providing these services. Nurse practitioners are also able to provide ongoing primary care to residents. It should be noted that even when the NP is the primary care provider for the resident, the Homes for Special Care Regulations states that each resident must be seen once every six months by a physician².

For long term care beds located in an acute care hospital, NPs need to know whether the beds are designated as acute care beds under the *Hospitals Act* or licensed as long term care beds under the *Homes for Special Care Act*. NPs should not be involved with the admission process for individuals being placed in acute care beds because in doing so, they may violate section 8 of the *Hospitals Act*.

For further information or anything contained within this document, please contact a NSCN practice consultant at practice@nscn.ca.

1 S 8. *Hospitals Act*.

2 S 26 *Homes for Special Care Regulations*

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