



The Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) is the regulatory body for licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in Nova Scotia. Our mandate is to protect the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing services by our registrants. The term nurse in this document refers to LPNs, RNs and NPs unless otherwise stated.

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Our practice support tools are developed using current reference material. The source of this material is available upon request.



This tool is a resource for NPs to help them understand:

- Scope of Practice
- Changing Client Population
- Collaboration
- Initiating a Practice
- Accepting Clients
- Discharging Clients
- Closing a Practice

Like all regulatory tools, use this document in conjunction with employer policy, applicable legislation and the standards of practice and code of ethics for LPNs, RNs and NPs.

Scope of Practice

The [Nursing Act](#), [NP Standards of Practice](#), [Entry-Level Competencies for Nurse Practitioners in Canada](#) and other related [provincial](#) and [federal](#) legislation define NP practice in Nova Scotia. Nurse Practitioners that have attained the appropriate competencies have the authority to:

- Prescribe all medications, including controlled drugs and substances, methadone and other opiate agonist therapy agents, cannabis, blood and blood products and medical devices.
- Perform invasive and non-invasive procedures.
- Order all laboratory and diagnostic imaging tests, such as X-rays, CT scans, ultrasounds and MRIs and utilize the radiologist's interpretation of the findings for diagnosis and treatment. Nurse Practitioners are not authorized to perform or interpret diagnostic imaging tests.
- Consult and refer to other health care providers for the management of clients' health care.
- Discharge clients from hospitals.
- Admit clients to long- term care facilities. For more information, see our [Considerations for NPs Caring for Residents of Long Term Care Facilities Professional Practice Bulletin](#).
- Complete Medical Certificate of Death (MCD).
- Perform capacity assessments under the [Adult Capacity and Decision-making Act \(ACDMA\)](#) after completing the education available through the [Public Trustees Office](#).
- Complete Worker's Compensation Board (WCB) forms as well as ordering diagnostic tests and treatments, prescribing medications and arranging consultations for WCB clients.
- Conduct the capacity assessment required for the provision of medical assistance in dying (MAiD) under the [Personal Directives Act](#).
- Complete Disability Tax Credit (DTC) certificates, Employment Insurance (EI) and Canada Pension Plan (CPP) disability benefits forms.
- Complete third-party insurer claim forms.

Effective July 1, 2020, NPs are now authorized to provide drug samples to clients. See our [Legislation Changes Enable Nurse Practitioners to Provide Drug Samples Professional Practice Bulletin](#).

In specific practice areas, NPs may be required to interpret a diagnostic imaging test for which they have received specific education (e.g., endotracheal tube placement, simple fractures).

NPs educated in NS prior to 2016 and those educated out of province need to complete the required MCD education through [Dalhousie University School of Nursing](#).

- Complete the following under the [Motor Vehicle Act Regulations](#):
 - [Driver’s Medical Examination Reports](#) concerning an individual’s medical fitness to drive
 - [Application for Accessible Parking Identification Permits and Plates](#) for vehicles transporting mobility disabled persons
 - Signed letters exempting persons from wearing a seat belt or child restraint system
 - Completing a medical fitness form for persons applying for licence reinstatement through the Alcohol Ignition Interlock Program.

At this time, based on other legislation, NPs are not authorized to:

- Admit clients into hospitals
- Complete a formal capacity assessment under the [Personal Directives Act](#)
- Complete applications to be excused from jury duty for illness purposes

Changing Client Population

Change of population is defined by NSCN as “moving from the client population that you are formally educated in and for which you have passed the applicable exam, to a client population for which you have not been educated or passed the applicable exam”.

You are required to report your intention to change client population to the NSCN CEO and receive approval from the Registration and Licensing Committee prior to providing care to a client population for which you have not completed education or passed the applicable licensure exam. This committee will review the application and may determine what, if any, additional education and exams are required for you to provide nursing services to the new client population. You can report your intention to change client population on our website [here](#).

You are not required to report to NSCN if you are providing nursing services to clients within the same population for which you were educated in and passed the applicable exam. For example, a “Family/All Ages” NP who passed the CNPE and is changing employment from a community clinic to an acute care facility does not need to submit documentation to NSCN.

Collaboration

Collaboration is a cornerstone of nursing practice regardless of your practice setting. It is important to identify your collaborators in the setting you are working in to allow seamless care for your clients.

As nurses, we establish collaborative relationships with other health care professionals and communicate with the most appropriate professional(s) for consultation or referral on a regular basis. These interactions occur when the client’s health care needs go beyond your individual or regulated scope of practice or when another professional’s expertise is required.

DID YOU KNOW?

As of June 4, 2019, NPs are not required to submit evidence of a collaborative relationship to NSCN.

Initiating a Practice

Nurse Practitioners starting a practice in Nova Scotia must be licensed with NSCN and hold liability insurance. A portion of your licensure fee pays for liability insurance through the [Canadian Nurses Protective Society \(CNPS\)](#). In addition, depending on employment or practice setting you may need to complete the following requirements before providing client care.

You will also need to speak with your employer directly to ensure you are aware of any additional specific employer forms and processes.

| REQUIREMENT | PURPOSE | CONTACT |
|--|---|--|
| Provider Number | Referrals to specialists | MSI Program Provider Coordinator at msiproviders@medavie.bluecross.ca or 902-496-7011 |
| Business Number | Billing, if required | MSI Program Provider Coordinator at msiproviders@medavie.bluecross.ca or 902-496-7011 |
| Provincial Medical Board (PMB) Number | Processing orders for laboratory tests through NSHA laboratories | Complete the LIS Physician Addition/Change Form |
| Nova Scotia Prescription Monitoring Program (NSPMP) Number | All NPs must have an NSPMP number, regardless of whether or not you prescribe controlled drugs and substances | The application is accessible at http://nspmp.ca/program.php |

Accepting Clients

When considering accepting clients into your practice it is important to understand your professional obligations, including:

- Discrimination against clients at any time including when considering them as new clients in your practice is not acceptable. The [Nova Scotia Human Rights Act](#) provides full details to help understand what grounds of discrimination are prohibited.
- Once a client is accepted from the *811-Find a Family Practice List*, you have accepted that client, despite what a screening visit may reveal. If the client's needs exceed your scope of practice, you are obligated to consult or refer a client to another health care provider. To prevent abandonment, you may only withdraw as a care provider in accordance with our [Abandonment Practice Guideline](#).
- Nurse Practitioners in private practice may be considered custodians of their client's records under Nova Scotia's [Personal Health Information Act \(PHIA\)](#). It is important to seek legal advice about proper management of this confidential information.

Discharging Clients

Discharging a client from your practice should be your last resort. You are accountable to discuss your concerns with the client and involve your employer to find a workable solution(s) to prevent discharge and ensure the client receives safe, compassionate and ethical care.

However, if the situation cannot be resolved and the client will be discharged from your practice, you must:

- Provide ongoing care until the accountability for the care of the client has been transferred
- Transfer the accountability to another care provider in the same location, if available
- If another care provider is not available within the same location;
 - Provide the client with information about how to find another health care provider
 - Provide a reasonable opportunity for the client to arrange alternative services
 - Develop a mutually acceptable plan to withdraw services

Closing a Practice - Temporarily or Permanently

You are accountable to take action to minimize interruptions to client care, whether you are leaving your practice temporarily or permanently you should:

- Notify your employer and the collaborative team of your intent to leave as soon as possible
- Develop a plan to manage client care, including follow up of any outstanding laboratory or diagnostic imaging and consultants reports that you have ordered or requested
- Inform clients about how to access an alternate provider and their medical records if required

- Notify MSI, Laboratory and Diagnostic Services, and NSPMP to indicate how client follow up (e.g. laboratory results, consultation reports, etc.) will be managed

Key Points

- The Nursing Act, *NP Standards of Practice, Entry-Level Competencies for NPs* and other related provincial and federal legislation define NP practice in Nova Scotia.
- You are not required to report a move to a different practice setting if it is within the same client population in which you have been educated and passed the exam.
- When accepting clients into your practice it is important to understand your professional obligations.
- Discharging a client from your practice should be your last resort.
- You are accountable to take action to minimize interruptions to client care.

Suggested Reading

- [Abandonment Practice Guideline](#)
- [Assessing Capacity Practice Guideline](#)
- [Confidentiality and Privacy of Personal Health Information Practice Guideline](#)
- [Considerations for NPs Caring for Residents of Long Term Care Facilities Professional Practice Bulletin](#)
- [Documentation Guidelines for Nurses](#)
- [Duty to Provide Care Practice Guideline](#)
- [Self-employment Practice Guideline](#)
- [Telenursing Practice Guideline](#)
- [Nurses Recommending Medical Supplies and Equipment Under the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program Q&A](#)
- [Legislation Changes Enable Nurse Practitioners to Provide Drug Samples Professional Practice Bulletin](#)