

The Nova Scotia College of Nursing 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 its registrants.

The *Cannabis Act* and *Cannabis Regulations* came into force on October 17, 2018, replacing the *Access to Medical Cannabis Regulations*. Under the *Cannabis Regulations*, nurse practitioners (NPs) are defined as health care practitioners authorized to prescribe medical cannabis for clients requiring this controlled substance as part of their treatment plan. For NPs, the activity of providing a medical document to authorize medical cannabis is referred to as prescribing (New Classes of Practitioners Regulations - s.3(2)(a)). NPs in Nova Scotia who have the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities are authorized to prescribe medical cannabis as part of their scope of practice.

This tool is a resource for NPs who may be prescribing cannabis in their practice to assist in their understanding of:

- How cannabis is prescribed
- Competencies
- Client education
- Where to find resources

Cannabis is prescribed by completing a Health Canada Medical Document or similar form, which contains the client and health care practitioner information required for the client to obtain medical cannabis. NPs must only provide medical documents for cannabis to clients under their direct care.

According to the NP Standards of Practice, NPs who prescribe medical cannabis are accountable to have the necessary competence to do so safely. It is important to educate clients on the risks, side effects, safe transportation and storage of cannabis as well as the importance of obtaining their cannabis from an authorized supplier. In addition, NPs must follow employer policy related to educational requirements and prescribing of medical cannabis in their practice setting.

As with any other aspect of NP practice, NPs who prescribe medical cannabis are accountable to maintain their competence through a combination of self-reflection, continuing competence activities and provision of care to clients requiring cannabis as part of their treatment plan. Completing education related to medical cannabis may be used as one learning goal for the annual Continuing Competence Program.

Further information about prescribing medical cannabis can be found in [Information for Health Care Practitioners - Medical Use of Cannabis](#).

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## Key points

- NPs in Nova Scotia are authorized to prescribe medical cannabis as long as they have the necessary competencies to do so.
- Health Canada requirements must be met in order to prescribe medical cannabis
- Client education is paramount
- NPs are required to maintain their competencies related to prescribing medical cannabis

## Suggested Reading

- [Cannabis Act](#)
- [Cannabis Regulations](#)
- [Regulations to Support Coming Into Force of the Cannabis Act](#)
- [Cannabis: Questions and Answers](#)
- [Controlled Drugs and Substances Act](#)
- [Narcotic Control Regulations](#)
- [New Classes of Practitioners Regulations](#)
- [Practice Guideline: Caring for Clients Authorized to Use Medical Cannabis](#)

For further information on anything contained within this practice guideline, please contact a NSCN Practice Consultant at [practice@nscn.ca](mailto:practice@nscn.ca).