

PRACTICE DIRECTIVE

Graduate Practical Nurse (GPN) Practice

Practice directives provide practical nurses, employers, and the general public with information regarding the professional expectations of practical nurses in Prince Edward Island. All practical nurses – including graduate practical nurses, and licensed practical nurses – are expected to review, understand and comply with the information disseminated in practice directions.

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Prince Edward Island (CLPNPEI) registers eligible applicants in the registry of Licensed Practical Nurses and provide certificates of registration authorizing LPNs to practice in the province of Prince Edward Island. It also regulates the practice of Licensed Practical Nurses¹ (LPNs) and governs its members in a manner that serves and protects the public interest. In meeting this objective, the CLPNPEI determines, as outlined by the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) and Licensed Practical Nurse Regulations, appropriate education requirements for LPNs and develops Standards of Practice and a Code of Ethics.

A nurse is required to possess a current certificate of registration prior to commencing employment as an LPN/GPN. A current certificate of registration indicates that a nurse has met the minimum requirement(s) to deliver safe, competent and ethical care and as such, nurses may not engage in any portion of the employer's orientation process (observation, clinical, classroom or self-study) without a current certificate of registration to practise as an LPN or GPN. Nurses and employers should be aware that third-party liability insurance coverage applies only to LPNs/GPNs with a current certificate of registration.

A graduate practical nurse is a person who;

- Has successfully completed a Prince Edward Island practical nursing program or a program outside of Prince Edward Island that the Council considers substantially equivalent to the program offered provincially.
- Is covered by professional liability insurance
- Has paid the applicable examination fee and applied to take the Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Examination (CPNRE) or is awaiting the results of the CPNRE.
- Has secured a GPN certificate of registration

A Graduate Practical Nurse is expected to meet the entry to practice competencies as described by the CLPNPEI. A GPN is also expected to be familiar with and practice within the framework of the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA), Licensed Practical Nurse Regulations, Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. While GPNs work under the supervision of a Licensed Practical Nurse, it is understood that this supervision may not be direct, one on one supervision for every nursing function in every nursing

¹ Includes graduate practical nurses

environment. The supervising LPN must be physically available to assist the GPN with nursing duties, provide guidance, mentorship and support as necessary. As the GPN becomes more confident and comfortable in his or her new role, it is understood that the GPN's level of autonomy will also increase. It is the GPN's responsibility to understand that;

- some practice areas may not be acceptable for employment, as supervision would not be available
- some employment settings will have policies in place that restrict GPNs from performing some nursing duties, and
- they must not assume a charge² role in their employment setting.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE STATEMENT

A GPN must be **supervised** in practicing practical nursing by a licensed practical nurse registered and in good standing with the CLPNPEI.

Practical nursing is defined as the application of particular knowledge and skills and judgment in providing practical nursing services to another person, including;

- (a) assessing the person,
- (b) collaborating in the development of a nursing plan of care,
- (c) implementing a nursing plan of care
- (d) evaluating the person on an ongoing basis for purposes including promoting health, preventing illness or providing palliative or rehabilitative care

A GPN is authorized to perform the reserved activities as outlined in section 18 of the Regulated Health Professions Act Licensed Practical Nurse Regulations:

- (1)(a) performing a procedure on tissue below the dermis or below the surface of a mucous membrane;*
- (b) administering a substance by injection, inhalation, mechanical ventilation, irrigation, transfusion or enteral or parenteral instillation;*
- (b.1) administering a drug or vaccine by any means;*
- (c) putting an instrument, hand or finger*
 - (i) beyond the external ear canal,*
 - (ii) beyond the point in the nasal passages where they normally narrow,*
 - (iii) beyond the larynx,*
 - (iv) beyond the opening of the urethra,*
 - (v) beyond the labia majora,*
 - (vi) beyond the anal verge, or*
 - (vii) into an artificial opening into the body.*
- (d) applying sound energy or electrical energy, other than ionizing radiation;*
- (e) applying electrical energy in the form of ionizing radiation to conduct an X-ray for the purpose of dental screening, diagnosis, or treatment.*

² Unless in collaboration and co-assigned with appropriate mentor.

Conditions

(2) A graduate practical nurse shall not perform a reserved activity referred to in subsection (1) unless it is performed pursuant to

(a) an order made by

(i) a person authorized to practice as a medical practitioner or a nurse practitioner under the laws of this province or another province or territory in Canada; or

(ii) a person authorized to practice as a dentist or registered nurse under the laws of this province or

(b) a Health PEI protocol

Administering a vaccine

(3). Notwithstanding subsection (2), a licensed practical nurse is authorized to administer by any means a vaccine prescribed by a person authorized to practise as a pharmacist under the laws of this province.

GPNs may administer all prescribed medication within the Scope of Practice and organization policies provided they are competent (possess the necessary knowledge, skill and judgment).

Designation

The graduate practical nurse may use the following designations;

- Graduate Practical Nurse
- GPN
- G.P.N

Duration and Expiration

The GPN certificate of registration is short term, will not exceed one year. Once expired, a GPN certificate of registration may not be renewed. A GPN must obtain the established pass mark on the CPNRE in not more than three attempts.

Upon successful completion, the GPN is eligible for a certificate of registration in the general registry for LPNs.

Requirement for Employment

A current CLPNPEI LPN/GPN certificate of registration is required to practice practical nursing in all employment settings. Employers and nurses share the accountability to ensure all employees hold a current LPN/GPN certificate of registration before the commencement of employment.³

Conclusion

All nurses entering the profession must understand and uphold the professional and legal obligations of being a practical nurse in Prince Edward Island. The transition period from GPN to LPN allows a graduate

³ Includes employer orientation EVEN if client care is not expected.

practical nurse time to build upon their foundational knowledge and skills, as well as build confidence while receiving support from all members of the professional team.

References

CLPNM (2014). Graduate Practical Nurse Practice -Practice Directive

CLPNNS (2016). Scope of Practice of the Graduate Practical Nurse

Government of Prince Edward Island (2017). The Regulated Health Professions Act.

Government of Prince Edward Island (2018). Licensed Practical Nurse Regulations

CLPNPEI (2018). Standards of Practice

CLPNPEI (2018). Code of Ethics

CLPNPEI (2018). Entry to Practice Competencies