



PRACTICE MEMO

DATE: January 13 2012

TO: Members and Stakeholders

FROM: Douglas A Bungay RN MN
Director of Professional Practice and Policy

RE: IV and Blood Therapy Entry Level Competencies
Mandatory versus Non-Mandatory Competencies

Effective January 1 2012, IV (which includes the initiation of IV therapy and administration of IV medication) and Blood therapy competencies become entry level competencies for LPNs in Nova Scotia. These are **not** mandatory competencies and will only impact those LPNs whose practice area will support the application of these psychomotor skills.

For LPNs who are currently in practice *and* have successfully completed a medication administration course, competency can be achieved in two ways:

1. Complete an accredited/approved post-graduate IV/Blood therapy program, such as the one to be offered at Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)*;
2. Complete an employer-based educational program consisting of a learning module and clinical learning opportunity.

IV/Blood Therapy employer-based programs should contain a sufficient balance between knowledge (learning module) and knowledge application (clinical learning opportunity). Knowledge includes background theory and best practice in relation to IV initiation and blood therapy.

Employer-based IV medication administration programs (which may be delivered in conjunction with, or separate from, IV/Blood therapy program) should also strike a balance between knowledge and knowledge application. Theory is to include best practices in IV medication administration, nursing care of clients receiving IV medications and professional responsibilities associated with IV medication administration. Employers may wish to customize a program by adding information specific to IV medications commonly used in the practice area.

Application of knowledge is the opportunity for LPNs to apply the knowledge they have gained in the learning modules, in *their practice context*. It is important to recognize that client needs and practice context determine the right nurse to enact any skill. LPNs (as all nurses), and employers must be able to clearly articulate clinical contexts or situations which support, and do not support the LPN to engage in IV/Blood therapy or IV medication administration. Learning modules should contain information to assist LPNs in the determination of appropriate practice context.

There are a variety of texts and professional resources available to guide employers in the development of an employer-based program. Employers and educators are encouraged to select one that meets their particular needs.

Mandatory versus Non-Mandatory Competencies

As always, the College's object is to ensure LPNs have the necessary competencies to provide safe, competent and ethical care. Changes in the National Practical Nurse Competencies have created the need for mandatory upgrading for some LPNs. The changes are based in the education programs for practical nurses and as such have resulted in groups of nurses with different upgrade requirements based on the year in which they graduated. Medication administration and physical assessment are currently, the only two (2) mandatory competencies and are required by those who need them, by October 31 2013.

Education for Mandatory Competencies

Mandatory competencies impact the practice of *every* LPN, it is important that there is consistency in content and learning outcomes. Education for mandatory competencies *generally* comes from an accredited/approved source, such as the community college; however, some options are available.

Medication Administration: Nurses who graduated from practical nursing programs in Nova Scotia between the years 1980 and 1989 **did not have** a pharmacology component in their core program. These nurses are required to take a formalized pharmacology and medication administration program from an accredited/approved source, (such as the community college) before October 31 2013 (regardless if medication administration is part of their day-to-day role or not).

Nurses, who graduated from practical nursing programs in Nova Scotia in the years prior to 1980 and 1990 and beyond, **have had** a pharmacology component in their core program. These nurses **are not** required to take a pharmacology and medication administration program *unless* they need professional refreshing of skills. Refreshing is necessary for nurses who are/will be required to administer medications in their day-to-day role and it has been more than five (5) years since they consistently performed this skill. Nurses, who are not expected to give medications in their day-to-day role, are not required to complete professional refreshing. Professional refreshing of medication administration skills can be achieved two ways;

1. Complete an accredited/approved medication administration* program, such as one offered by the community college; or
2. Complete an employer-based **medication refresher program** equipped with learning modules based on best-practice and evidence and a clinical learning or precepting opportunity.

*Currently, the accredited/approved post-graduate medication administration program offered by NSCC **does not** include content on IV/Blood Therapy. (IV/Blood therapy content will be added to the post-graduate medication administration program in September 2012.)

Physical/Assessment: Nurses who graduated from a core program before 2000 or the re-entry program before 2007 require a physical assessment course before October 31 2013. This competency may be achieved in one of three ways;

1. Complete an accredited/approved program , such as the one offered by the community college;
2. Complete a program* offered by a private educator/company; or
3. Complete an employer-based program*.

* http://www.cpnns.ca/practice_memos/May11_Mandatory_Upgrades.pdf (includes program content requirements)

Education for Non-Mandatory Competencies

Non-mandatory competencies are those psychomotor skills that are added to the practice of the practical nurse, in response to the evolution of the practice. Four (4) non-mandatory competencies (IV insertion/initiation, administration of IV medication, initiation of Blood and blood products and initiation of hypodermoclysis) are added in 2012.

Education delivery is more flexible with non-mandatory competencies because the impact is limited to LPNs who will be engaging in the skill and not the general LPN population. Competency for the above or **any** non-mandatory competency can be achieved two (2) ways:

1. Complete an accredited/approved post-graduate program (if available), such as ones offered at Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) or other institution;
2. Complete a private or employer-based course, complete with learning module and clinical learning opportunity.

Transferability of Programs/Course for Mandatory and Non-Mandatory Competencies

Mandatory: Accredited/approved programs for mandatory competencies transfer to all sites across Nova Scotia and Canada. Private educator programs for mandatory competencies transfer to all sites across Nova Scotia. Employer based programs for mandatory competencies, *may not* transfer to other employers depending on the new employers requirements. Private educator and employer-based programs **may not** transfer to jurisdictions outside Nova Scotia. As a result, a member may be required to complete an additional accredited/approved physical assessment course to be licensed outside Nova Scotia.

Non-Mandatory: CLPNNS recognizes that employer-based programs for non-mandatory competencies are transferrable to all sites across Nova Scotia. That said, members should be aware that employers may have specific policies requiring newly hired nurses to complete organization-specific education *before* engaging in a technical skill in their new employment setting, regardless of previous education. CLPNNS supports an employer-based PLAR process for members moving within Nova Scotia or coming from jurisdictions outside Nova Scotia.

References

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia, (2008). *Competency Profile for Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia*, Halifax, Author.

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia, (2011). *Practice Guideline: LPNs and IV Medication Administration*, Halifax, Author.

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia, (2011). *Practice Memo: Initiation of Peripheral IVs and Administration of IV Medications*, Halifax, Author.

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia, (2011). *Practice Memo: Mandatory Practice Upgrades; Medication Administration and Physical Assessment*, Halifax, Author.

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia, (2011). *Practice Memo: Entry Level Competencies and Beyond Entry Level Competencies*, Halifax, Author.

Government of Nova Scotia, *Licensed Practical Nurses Act*, Statutes of Nova Scotia, c.17, Halifax, 2006.

Government of Nova Scotia, *LPNs Regulations of the Licensed Practical Nurses Act*, c. 17, Halifax, Registry of Regulations, 2006.

****NSCC is planning an IV/Blood Therapy course in March 2012. Contact Rachel Kuipers @ rachel.kuipers@nsc.ca or 491 3581 for more information.***