

NURSE PRACTITIONERS



EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION

- initial preparation and experience as a registered nurse
- study at university
- graduate with a master's degree in nursing with a nurse practitioner focus*

* Most NPs practising in Nova Scotia graduated from a post-baccalaureate or master's program. As of 2007, all NPs are required to graduate with a Master of Nursing degree with a nurse practitioner focus.

ROLES

- clinical care, education, research
- practise in locations such as community-based health and wellness centres, hospitals, clinics and nursing homes

RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the responsibilities of LPNs and RNs, nurse practitioners, in collaborative relationships with doctors,:

- apply advanced nursing knowledge in diagnosing and treating illnesses (acute and chronic) and injuries
- identify healthcare trends within communities and populations
- implement programs to promote health and prevent illness/injury
- order X-rays; order and interpret laboratory tests
- prescribe medications
- perform specified medical procedures
- refer clients to specialists and/or other health professionals

As the regulatory bodies for nursing in Nova Scotia, the College of Licensed Practical Nurses and the College of Registered Nurses:

- set the educational requirements for those entering the nursing profession
- issue licences to qualified applicants
- establish standards for nursing practice
- promote and enhance nurses' continuing competence
- review and take appropriate action on complaints about nursing practice.



For more information on LPNs or the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia, please contact:

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College of Registered Nurses
of Nova Scotia

For more information on RNs and NPs or the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia, please contact:

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TODAY'S NURSES...

at a glance



College of Registered Nurses
of Nova Scotia

TODAY'S NURSES...

Nurses are the single largest group of healthcare professionals in Canada; yet people often find it difficult to tell which care providers are actually nurses. Many people are also unfamiliar with the extent of what nurses do (i.e., their roles) and what responsibilities they hold – generally referred to within the profession as their 'scope of practice'.

There are three categories of nurses in Nova Scotia: licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs), and nurse practitioners (NPs). Provincial law protects the title 'nurse', and only those licensed in one of these three categories can call themselves 'nurses' and use the designation of 'LPN', 'RN', or 'NP'.

While the overall goal of nursing is to promote optimum health and prevent illness, the roles and responsibilities of LPNs, RNs and NPs differ. These differences are based on provincial law as well as individual nurses' initial and ongoing education, experience, and professional development. In their work settings, nurses practise together and with other healthcare providers to ensure quality care. In some situations the roles and responsibilities of nurses may overlap.

To ensure that the public receives safe, competent and ethical care, beginning nurses must graduate from approved nursing programs and pass a national exam. Nurses must also have a licence to practise nursing, and must renew their licence every year in which they plan to practise.

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses regulates the practice and education of LPNs, while the regulatory body for RNs and NPs is the College of Registered Nurses.

LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES...



EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION

- study at community college
- graduate with a practical nursing diploma*

** Many practising LPNs (including former certified nursing assistants) graduated at the certificate level. As of September 2006, LPNs entering the profession are required to have a practical nursing diploma.*

ROLES

- clinical care
- practise in locations such as hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and communities

RESPONSIBILITIES

- apply basic nursing knowledge, skills and judgment in the provision of care to individuals of all ages, including families and groups
- independently provide nursing care to individuals with stable health conditions and predictable health outcomes
- consult and practise with other healthcare professionals (e.g., RNs, doctors, pharmacists) when caring for individuals with unstable conditions and/or unpredictable health outcomes
- promote health and prevent illness through education of individual clients
- provide palliative and rehabilitative care
- advocate on behalf of individuals (clients)
- participate in data collection for research purposes

REGISTERED NURSES...



EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION

- study at university
- graduate with a baccalaureate degree in nursing (BN or BScN)*

** Many practising RNs graduated from diploma programs. Since 1995, the basic education required to become a registered nurse in Nova Scotia has been a baccalaureate degree in nursing.*

ROLES

- clinical care, education, administration, research and/or policy development
- practise in locations such as hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, communities, government, business and educational settings

RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the responsibilities identified for LPNs, registered nurses:

- apply in-depth nursing knowledge, skills and judgment in providing care to individuals of all ages (includes families, groups, populations and communities)
- independently provide care when health conditions are unstable and health outcomes are unpredictable
- apply advanced nursing knowledge in specialized areas of care
- manage and coordinate care, evaluate health outcomes
- educate, counsel and advocate for individuals of all ages, to meet health goals
- develop and lead health promotion programs
- develop broad health policies
- participate in and/or conduct research to improve nursing practice and advance nursing knowledge