

## Introduction

# Developing Practice Standards and Guidelines

### What are practice standards and guidelines?

The College of Nurses of Ontario (the College) produces a number of practice standards and guidelines to support nurses in providing safe, effective and ethical nursing care to the people of Ontario.

Practice standards outline the expectations for nurses that contribute to public protection. They inform nurses of their accountabilities and the public of what to expect of nurses. The standards apply to all nurses regardless of their role, job description or area of practice.

Practice guidelines help nurses understand their responsibilities, and to make safe and effective decisions in their nursing practice.

Some of these documents, such as the *Therapeutic Nurse-Client Relationship, Revised 2006* and *Documentation, Revised 2008* practice standards, and the *Culturally Sensitive Care* practice guideline, apply to all practising nurses. Other documents, such as the *Utilization of Unregulated Care Providers (UCPs)* and *Complementary Therapies* practice guidelines, address specific practice issues.

The College's practice standards and guidelines are consistent with the legislation that is relevant to the practice of nursing in Ontario (for example, the *Nursing Act, 1991*, *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* and *Health Care Consent Act*).

To help nurses meet the expectations outlined in the practice standards and guidelines, the College provides a variety of educational and consultative services, including the online learning modules, individual consultations and a sector-specific Outreach Program.

Nurses can also learn how to apply the standards and guidelines by reading *The Standard*, the quarterly magazine for members.

### Developing standards and guidelines

Practice standards and guidelines are revised to reflect changes in the health care sector. College staff and Council members, as well as nurses and employers, play an important role in ensuring that the documents are up-to-date and relevant to current nursing practice environments.

Drafting practice standards is a key function of a self-regulating profession. The College decides to publish a new practice standard or guideline or revise an existing document based on trends in health care and nursing. It consults extensively with nurses in a variety of practice settings before writing or revising a practice standard or guideline. Council then reviews and adopts the final document in an open meeting.

All practice standards and guidelines apply broadly to the nursing profession and are delivered to every nurse in Ontario with *The Standard*. These and other important documents are also available on the College's website.

### For more information

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