



CNO Requires Controlled Substances Education

Proposed regulations that will enable NPs to prescribe controlled substances are expected to come into effect by the end of March 2017. [See Minister Hoskins' letter for more information about this timeline.](#)

To be able to prescribe controlled substances when these regulation changes come into effect, you will need to complete, by March 10, 2017, one of two courses that have been approved by Council.

Once the regulations are approved, prescribing controlled substances will become part of the scope of practice for Ontario NPs. If you do not complete the education required to prescribe controlled substances, your profile on the public register, [Find a Nurse](#), will indicate that your practice has restrictions.

Because prescribing controlled substances is a high risk activity, it is in the public's interest for you to have the competencies related to prescribing and managing controlled substances. Successfully completing one of the courses will help to ensure you have the needed competencies.

In addition to information in this email and [Q&As on our website](#), CNO will be hosting teleconferences early in January to describe the proposed changes and answer questions you may have. We will be posting dates, times and registration information on the [teleconference web page](#).

Approved courses

The following two courses were approved by Council on Dec. 7, 2016:

1. Athabasca University's *Prescription and Management of Controlled Drugs and Substances* course (this course is offered in English):
<http://fhd.athabascau.ca/programs/pd/index.php>.
2. *Prescribing Narcotics and Controlled Substances* course offered through the University of Ottawa and available through the Ontario Primary Health Care NP Program Website. This course is offered in English and French and is approved if taken on or after Jan. 17, 2014:
<http://cpd.np-education.ca/> or <http://np-education.ca/>.

Each is offered in an online learning format, which gives you the flexibility to complete one according to your own schedule. You will be required to pay a fee for the course you select.

Council approved these courses in advance of final approval of draft regulations and by-laws to give NPs the opportunity to meet the education requirement before changes take effect.

What if I do not complete this education?

If you choose to not complete one of the two courses by the time the regulations take effect:

1. **you will not be authorized to prescribe controlled substances**
2. **your profile on *Find A Nurse* will indicate you are “entitled to practise with restrictions” with a note indicating that you are not authorized to prescribe controlled substance; and**
3. **the College will notify any employer we have on record for you at that time that there is a restriction on your practice as an NP.**

The course content is broader than prescribing — even if you don’t prescribe controlled substances, it teaches competencies for managing clients who may be taking controlled substances.

How soon should I complete the course?

Based on the date the regulations are expected to take effect, **you should successfully complete the course by Mar. 10, 2017** to avoid having a restriction placed on your profile on Find a Nurse. This deadline allows the universities providing the courses and CNO enough time to process the information related to your course completion. Once this process is completed, we will send you confirmation by email.

What if I’ve already completed an approved course?

Council approved recognition of prior completion of the two courses listed above. If you have already completed one of the approved courses, [read the Q&As about the education requirement on the NPs and Prescribing Controlled Substances page](#) to learn how to make sure the College can confirm your successful completion of the course.

Can I start prescribing controlled substances once I complete the course?

You will only be legally authorized to prescribe controlled substances after:

1. **you complete an approved controlled substances course; and**

2. Council and government approve the change to regulations.

We will inform you by email once the regulations take effect. You can also visit <http://www.cno.org/en/trending-topics/nps-and-prescribing-controlled-substances/> for updates.

Summary:

1. You should successfully complete one of the two approved courses by **Mar. 10, 2017** or a restriction will be placed on your registration on Find a Nurse.
2. The university providing the course will send CNO confirmation after you successfully complete the course. You do not need to notify CNO of this completion.
3. Approximately three weeks after you successfully complete the course, CNO will send you an email confirming that we received this information.

For more information about the proposed changes to the regulations enabling NPs to prescribe controlled substance, read "[Have your say: NPs' authority to prescribe controlled substances.](#)"

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