

COLLEGE OF NURSES OF ONTARIO'S Academic Reference Group

News to Use: January 2024

What is the Academic Reference Group?

The Academic Reference Group is made up of academic stakeholders and representatives of the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) who share information and collaborate on nursing regulatory issues of mutual interest and concern.

The group includes 12 Ontario nursing educators who have volunteered to represent all nursing programs in the province.

The goal of the group is to provide an opportunity for discussion and collaboration on regulatory issues of importance to both educators and the College of Nurses of Ontario.

Welcome

We appreciate your time and thank you for your continued engagement as a member of the Academic Reference Group.

Program Approval

At the December meeting, Council approved two baccalaureate programs, along with four new RN Prescribing Programs. The list of [approved nursing programs](#) has been updated based on Council's decisions. RN Prescribing Programs approved by Council can be found [here](#).

CNO expects to review more new programs throughout 2024. To start the [preliminary approval](#) process, please email [Donna Rawlin](#), Education Team Lead, regarding your intent to offer a new program(s) at least one year before commencing the program.

Registration exams

CNO has recently shared Q4 2023 REx-PN and NCLEX-RN exam reports. If you have any difficulty accessing your report, please contact [Sean Knight](#).

REx-PN and NCLEX-RN 2023 blueprint results will be sent to each program in early 2024. Once received, if you would like to schedule a meeting to discuss your results, please contact [Donna Rawlin](#), Education Team Lead.

RN Prescribing

Registered Nurses (RNs) in Ontario have the option to expand their scope of practice under the *Nursing Act, 1991*, to [prescribe specific medication](#) and communicate diagnoses for the purpose of prescribing those medications.

On December 06, 2023, Council approved four new [RN Prescribing education programs](#). RNs who wish to prescribe must complete Council-approved RN prescribing education. These programs have been designed to educate RNs to prescribe medication and communicate diagnoses for the purposes of prescribing safely, effectively and ethically. RNs are encouraged to contact the schools directly with questions about their RN prescribing education program.

CNO assessed RN prescribing education programs with a rigorous program approval process to ensure RNs who graduate from these programs have the knowledge, skill and judgment to practice safely within this expanded scope of practice. The program approval process supports CNO's public protection mandate. Any additional RN prescribing education programs proposed in the future will be reviewed according to the same rigorous program review process and brought to Council for consideration. CNO will monitor RN prescribing changes and will be in contact with schools to ensure changes are integrated into the programs. Please

GROUP MEMBERS

We encourage you to share your feedback with any member of the Academic Reference Group:

Renee Berquist
St. Lawrence College

Annie Berthiaume
Collège Boréal

Mariève Chartrand
Collège La Cité

Wendy Ellis
George Brown College

Lisa-Anne Hagerman
Conestoga College

Kathryn Halverson
Brock University

Erin Kennedy
Western University

Kumaran Mahathevan
Centennial College

June Raymond
Cambrian College

Alison Thompson
Lakehead University

Katherine Trip
University of Toronto

Anne Marie Shin
College of Nurses of Ontario

Donna Rawlin
College of Nurses of Ontario

Neshma Dhanani
College of Nurses of Ontario

Giovanna Graci
College of Nurses of Ontario

Nathalie Peladeau
College of Nurses of Ontario

Irene Wu-Lau
College of Nurses of Ontario

contact [Irene Wu-Lau](#), Education Consultant, with RN Prescribing education inquiries.

CNO Council also approved the new [Registered Nurse \(RN\) Prescribing](#) practice standard. This standard has been developed to support safe practice by RNs with prescribing authority and other stakeholders' understanding of this expanded scope of practice and associated accountabilities. The standard outlines the legislated scope of practice and professional accountabilities for RNs with prescribing authority. The amendments to the regulation also include changes to medication practices for all nurses. The *Medication*, *Scope of Practice* and *Nurse Practitioner* practice standards have been updated to reflect the new regulation change:

- [Medication](#) standard includes new dispensing label requirements and new practice requirements for nurses when dispensing or administering medication by injection or inhalation.
- [Scope of Practice](#) standard includes additional clarity to permit RNs and RPNs to dispense or administer by injection or inhalation certain medications if ordered by RNs with prescribing authority.
- [Nurse Practitioner](#) standard includes removal of certain conditions that only applied to NPs when dispensing medication.

RNs are expected to practice in compliance with both legislation and CNO practice standards. Some practice environments may not allow RN prescribing. For example, the *Public Hospitals Act* prevents RNs who are employed by a hospital from prescribing. In addition, some employer policies may not permit RNs to prescribe in a specific setting. RNs who are considering expanding their scope to prescribe should consult with their employers to confirm if RN prescribing will be supported in the practice setting. It is equally critical that employers who plan to enable RN prescribing consult nurses and put the necessary supports in place to roll it out safely. If you have questions about the Registered Nurse (RN) Prescribing practice standard, please contact [Cathy Tersigni](#), Advanced Practice Consultant.

To support this scope expansion and system change, CNO has developed new resources, including [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and the [RN Prescribing Decision Tree](#). In addition, two English webinars have been scheduled on Zoom to support nurses interested in becoming authorized to prescribe:

- Wednesday, Jan. 24 at 7:00 pm
- Tuesday, Jan. 30 at 12:00 noon

You only need to attend one session. [Learn more about the webinars.](#)

Nurse Practitioner Regulation Framework Implementation Plan Project (NPR-FIPP)

The objective of NPR-FIPP is to develop and implement a new national NP regulatory model which has one registration/licensing category of nurse practitioner. Regulators will no longer regulate different categories of NP practice but will continue to require NPs to practice within their individual competence and regulated scope of practice. NPs across the country are to be educated based on common NP entry-level competencies, take a common NP entry-level exam, and be ready to provide care across the life span in all practice settings.

Current activities include:

- Completion of the NP practice analysis, including a national survey of NPs in early 2024
- Support of Measure Learning to develop the NP single entry-level exam based on findings from the practice analysis

Update on Prescribing Controlled Substances

Effective November 29, 2023, [exemptions](#) have been issued under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA). Previously, federal law prohibited NPs from prescribing anabolic steroids except testosterone. NPs can now prescribe anabolic steroids for therapeutic use (for example, DHEA, also known as prasterone). For more information on the list of anabolic steroids, see item 1 of Part III of the schedule to Part G of the [Food and Drug Regulations](#).

Note: Amphetamine, benzphetamine, methamphetamine, phenmetrazine and phendimetrazine and its salts are controlled substances which remain a part of an NPs prescribing authority in Ontario.

Medical Assistance in Dying MAiD Update

With the anticipated federal changes to MAiD legislation to include mental health disorders, CNO has been reviewing and updating existing resources to inform nurse's roles when supporting MAiD. A National Practice Standard Task Group released a [Model Practice Standard for MAiD](#) in March 2023. We are currently reviewing and adapting this work into CNO's existing [Guidance on Nurses' Roles in Medical Assistance in Dying](#). The new guidance document and supporting resources will be released in 2024 to align with anticipated changes to the MAiD legislation. The focus of this work will be to ensure Nurse Practitioners who are involved with MAiD as assessors or providers are supported for this change in practice.

Quality Assurance

CNO has updated the [Quality Assurance \(QA\) Program](#) to support greater relevancy to everyday nursing practice and increase the reach of the program. We have implemented a more user-friendly technology platform and process improvements to better support nurses going through QA Assessment. The program had a successful soft launch of the new approach last summer and started another QA Assessment cycle in October 2023 with a larger number of nurses randomly selected to participate.

You can find our QA resources and access the updated Learning Plan template on CNO's [QA webpage](#). More changes to the program will be coming in 2024. Please continue to monitor [cno.org](#) for updates. If you have any questions about the QA program, please email CNO at QAassessment@CNOmail.org for additional support.

ARG membership recruitment

CNO continues to recruit new members for a three-year term starting in 2024. The ARG includes representation from all nursing programs. We currently need university-based program representatives, from diverse areas across the province to maintain equitable representation between colleges and universities. [Learn more](#) about CNO's recruitment for new members.

CNO extends a big thank you to all past and current ARG members for their ongoing participation and support. Your involvement helps inform our regulatory role and ensures Ontario nursing education program graduates are ready to practice safely and competently.



Council updates

Read the [December 2023 Council meeting materials](#).

Please share this update with other nursing educators at your school.