

COLLEGE OF NURSES OF ONTARIO'S Employer Reference Group

CNO News to Use

June 17, 2026

Regulatory Changes and Updates

Single Nurse Practitioner Classification

Effective **July 1, 2026**, CNO will be moving to a single Nurse Practitioner (NP) classification in Ontario. This means that current Ontario NP registrants with NP-Adult, NP-Pediatrics and NP-Primary Health Care registration certificates will be automatically transitioned to a single classification (as NPs) without having to complete further education, examinations and training. NPs can and will continue to deliver care with their current patient populations and within current scopes of practice. Removing the need for a population-specific certificate allows the NP, if needed, to work more flexibly, potentially increasing patient access to qualified health care providers.

In April 2026, CNO hosted a virtual webinar on a single NP classification. The [recording](#) is now available for those interested and who could not attend. To support NPs with the transition to a single NP class, CNO has also developed and launched [new Quality Assurance resources for NPs](#), including several new sample learning plans NPs can use if they wish to expand their practice to include new settings or populations.

For more information on the national NP regulation project, please join us for a [Coffee Chat with CNO](#) on July 8, 2026, and visit our [CNO webpage](#) outlining the national work, key milestones, engagement opportunities and frequently asked questions.

Controlled Substances Regulation Changes

Effective **October 1, 2026**, the new [Controlled Substances Regulations](#) (CSR) will consolidate four regulations and six class exemptions of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA) into a single new regulation. The CSR is meant to be a comprehensive regulatory framework governing legitimate activities with all categories of controlled substances conducted by licensed dealers, pharmacists, practitioners, hospitals and individuals. The impact this will have on Nurse Practitioners (NP) include:

- Removal of restrictions on prescribing certain controlled substances including opium and coca leaves
- Additional detailed requirements for record-keeping (including newly added requirements for post-consumer returns), protective measures and reporting of losses or theft
- Authority to destroy a post-consumer return or to sell or provide returned controlled substances to a licensed dealer specialized in destruction so that the products can be destroyed
- Authority to send, deliver and transport a controlled substance, and to sell or provide a controlled substance to a licensed dealer or the Minister for the purposes of destruction.

For additional practice resources, keep checking the [NP resource page](#) for updates!

National RN & RPN Entry-Level Competencies Revision Project

The national Registered Nurse (RN) and Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) entry-level competencies (ELCs) are undergoing a scheduled five-year review led by Canadian Council of Registered Nurse Regulators (CCRNR) and Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators (CCPNR), with support from all jurisdictions and coordination by external consultants Sense and Nous.

A key milestone in the revision process was the national ELC validation survey, which took place in April across jurisdictions throughout Canada. Nurses were invited to participate in the survey to validate the proposed updates to the RN and RPN competencies, helping to inform how future nurses are educated to provide safe, quality care in Ontario and across the country. Nationally, 25,761 RNs and RPNs responded to the survey. The average completion rate was 44.2%. In Ontario, approximately 11,245 RNs and RPNs completed the survey and shared their feedback and insights on the proposed revisions.

Over the coming weeks, the national Steering Committees will review the survey findings and provide final recommendations as the project moves toward finalizing the updated RN and RPN ELCs.

Workforce Census

In April 2026, CNO published a new set of results from the Workforce Census that describe nurses' experiences with CNO related to the registration and professional conduct processes and general perceptions of equity. Findings were based on the Workforce Census survey, where we heard from over 31,000 nurses about their identities and experiences within the nursing profession in Ontario.

Our findings suggest that different groups experience CNO in diverse ways, and CNO has identified actions to improve experiences for equity-deserving groups. We hope CNO's initial data collection helps to strengthen the growing evidence on the importance of equity in regulation. You can find more information and access the report on CNO's [Workforce Census](#) webpage.

2027-2031 CNO Strategic Plan

CNO's new Strategic Plan was approved at [CNO's Council meeting in March](#). The 2027–2031 Strategic Plan will come into effect in January 2027 and sets CNO's direction and priorities for how CNO continues to deliver our purpose, which is to protect the public by promoting safe nursing practice.

This was a significant collaborative effort, we would like to thank our external system partners, including ERG members, for their valuable contributions throughout the process. Over 2,200 people and organizations shared their time, insights and expertise.

Over the 5-year period, we will focus on four broad imperatives:

- Enhancing regulatory excellence
- Strengthening relationships & awareness
- Shaping system solutions
- Building internal capabilities.

Over the coming months, there will be additional information on cno.org. Just as the strategic plan was born out of collaboration with system partners, collaboration will remain key to its implementation. We look forward to future conversation with ERG members.

New practice resources and updates

New Educational Tool: Social Media: Reflect Before You Post

CNO has released a new educational tool, [Social Media: Reflect Before You Post](#) to support nurses in navigating professional responsibilities in today's digital environment. This new tool further supports nurses' application through case scenarios and strategies to promote safe and ethical social media use in practice.

Social media offers opportunities to share knowledge, advocate for change and connect with others, but it also comes with important professional accountabilities. This tool highlights how a nurse's online presence, whether personal or professional, reflects their commitment to safe, ethical and respectful practice. Through practical guidance and reflective questions, the tool helps nurses:

- Understand key considerations when using social media
- Connect their online activities to CNO practice standards and professional expectations
- Strengthen their ability to make thoughtful, accountable decisions before posting

Intimate Partner Violence Web Resource & Virtual Panel

Nurses play a critical role in recognizing, responding to, and supporting individuals experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) through compassionate, respectful, and culturally safe care. In recognition of this role, a new IPV web resource will be launched later this summer. By translating key learnings into accessible, real-world applications, the IPV resource will help nurses reflect on their responsibilities, enhance their clinical judgment and contribute to safer care for individuals experiencing violence.

In response to a recent Office of the Chief Coroner report, CNO will be partnering with other Ontario health regulatory colleges for a panel discussion about issues surrounding IPV. Tune into the panel discussion on **September 22**, at 12p.m. to learn about tools and strategies when working with clients experiencing IPV. Registration is required with more information to be posted on cno.org.

Coffee Chats with CNO

CNO has now successfully launched [Coffee Chats](#)! Coffee Chats are a great opportunity for professional growth, networking and meaningful discussion. Each chat focuses on a set topic, with plenty of space to ask questions, share experiences and hear different perspectives.

Join us for our next Coffee Chat on **July 8, 2026**, at 12:00 p.m. on the Single NP Classification Regulation. Please [register](#) for this chat if you are interested in attending. We have two more Coffee Chats planned for the Fall so stay tuned for more information.

Did You Know?

CNO's Practice Quality team also supports employers with collaborative presentations on the standards of practice and applying them to your specific practice setting. If your organization is interested in arranging a virtual or in person presentation on the standards of practice and how they apply within your practice setting, please contact us through our [online form](#).

Questions?

If you have any questions about this issue of *CNO News to Use* or nursing practice, please contact CNO's Practice Quality team by completing the [online practice support form](#).