

COLLEGE OF NURSES OF ONTARIO'S Academic Reference Group

October 19, 2020

What is the Academic Reference Group?

The Academic Reference Group is made up of educators 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 10 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 and Pandemic Check-in

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting. It was noted that our last two scheduled meetings in 2020 were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic (March and June 2020). Members shared their respective curricular revisions with September term start-up, including increased need for virtual learning, reduced numbers of students per lab for psychomotor skill practice and ongoing challenges with clinical placement availability, especially for certain regions like Toronto.

Program Approval Update

In response to the pandemic, CNO provided program approval timelines updates. Programs were notified that annual and comprehensive program reviews will be presented at the December 2020 Council meeting, moved from June 2020. Next year, program approval review will be extended to December 2021 Council meeting and the following year, it will move to September 2022 Council meeting. We anticipate having program approval timelines back to regular June Council meetings in 2023. Indicator 8 and 9 data collection was suspended during the pandemic but will resume in January 2021. Practical nursing and baccalaureate programs were reminded that new RPN and RN entry to practice (TP) competencies are now in effect, September 2020.

Stand Alone Degrees

CNO is seeking feedback on a proposed regulation change to the Nursing Act, 1991 as requested by the Ministry of Health. Once enacted, this change will enable Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology to offer baccalaureate programs in nursing independently from universities, on a standalone basis. The consultation period will run from October 20 to November 18, 2020. If you would like to provide feedback, please access <https://www.cno.org/en/what-is-cno/public-consultations/>.

CNO has been working with Colleges that have expressed an interest in delivering stand alone nursing degree programs. In addition to meeting the Ministry's requirements for establishing stand alone degrees, new programs must also obtain CNO's preliminary program approval. It is recommended that schools contact CNO at least one year prior to their proposed program start date to begin the preliminary approval process.

NP Scope of Practice Changes

Bill C-4 made amendments to Section 14 of the Food and Drug Act. The amendments which came into effect on July 1st of this year now permits NPs to accept and distribute medication samples to their patients. The timeline for scope changes permitting NPs to order MRIs, CTs and order and perform point of care testing has been impacted by COVID. We are waiting for a date from the government as to when the laws will be amended.

GROUP MEMBERS

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

Sandra DeLuca
Fanshawe College, Western University

Laura Gedcke-Kerr
Queen's University

Sandra Merklinger
University of Toronto

Sylvie Larocque
Laurentian University/Université Laurentienne

Paula Mastrilli
George Brown College

Mary McGrory
Humber Institute of Technology & Advance Learning

Linda Patrick
University of Windsor

Karen Poole
Lakehead University

Kumaran Mahathevan
Centennial College

Carol Timmings
College of Nurses of Ontario

Anne Marie Shin
College of Nurses of Ontario

Donna Rawlin
College of Nurses of Ontario

RPN Scope of Practice Changes

At its September meeting, Council approved proposed regulations will allow RPNs to initiate components of four specific controlled acts. This means RPNs who have the relevant competence will be able to independently decide that a procedure is required, then safely perform the procedure without first obtaining an order. For more information, please see <https://www.cno.org/en/learn-about-standards-guidelines/magazines-newsletters/the-standard/October-2020/Moving-forward-with-RPN-scope-of-practice-expansion>

Three Factor Framework Revisions

Nursing practice continues to evolve to meet system demands. In order respond to the ever-evolving scope of practice changes for all categories, CNO will be retiring the document RN and RPN Practice: The Client, The Nurse and The Environment and developing a new web-based resource that will focus on clearly articulating how to understand an individual nurses scope of competence. Information will be shared with the reference group as this work moves forward, including opportunities to provide feedback.

Quality Assurance

In response to the pandemic, the original quality assurance program development plans have been simplified to focus on practice reflection for 2020. CNO has developed new resources such as new reflective practice questions to help nurses with their reflective practice. New resources are available on our webpage [insert link here]. We will continue to engage with stakeholders for feedback about future planning for 2021.

Next meeting, January 25, 2021, 0930-1130 hrs.

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