



Discussion Note – September 2021 Council

Modernizing Practice Standards

Contact for Questions or More Information

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Introduction

We are seeking Council's input on key considerations and next steps to support modernizing CNO's practice standards.

Strategic Outcome

Modernizing practice standards support the implementation of CNO's [Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#).

Informed by evidence, the objectives of this initiative are to ensure practice standards are:

- accessible (clear and easy-to-understand)
- defensible (evidence-informed, measurable), and
- relevant (reflect contemporary practice, informed by stakeholders, and meet stakeholder needs)

Modernized practice standards advance CNO's strategic outcome so that *nurses' conduct will exemplify understanding and integration of CNO standards for safe practice.*

Background

In [March 2021](#) and June 2021, Council reviewed and provided feedback on a draft evidence-informed¹ framework to guide CNO's standards modernization.

At the [June 2021](#) Council meeting, Council discussed the importance of clearly articulating nurses' accountabilities in the practice standards and guidance, including addressing issues related to health equity. It was noted that maintaining guidance, such as decision trees, would be important practice resources if specific practice standards were to be retired. Council confirmed that the framework will support CNO becoming a more proactive regulator.

¹ Literature (academic, grey), environmental scan, legislative analysis, and preliminary stakeholder perspectives. Refer to the March 2021 and June 2021 briefing note for more information.



Under this draft framework, CNO proposed that the Code of Conduct, which was first approved in December 2018, would be updated to ensure relevance to current nursing practice, health system realities, changing expectations and societal values. Given that the Code of Conduct is meant to be overarching and set out the key accountabilities of a nurse, topic specific practice standards would be situated underneath the Code of Conduct, as appropriate, to contain the necessary detail to support the breadth of CNO's regulatory work to protect the public.

This draft framework continues to evolve and be informed by many sources of evidence which includes:

- literature,
- jurisdictional scans,
- identifying and analysing risk to the public,
- consultation with regulatory functions and,
- preliminary stakeholder perspectives.

Council received and discussed the findings of the literature review and jurisdictional scans in [March 2021](#).

Preliminary Stakeholder Perspectives

Given the COVID-19 pandemic, external engagement and broad communication has been limited. Early consultations with the following stakeholders have been conducted to date:

- Citizen's Advisory Group,
- Nurse Advisory Group² and
- Key Informants in diversity, equity and inclusion.

Key themes from these consultations are outlined below:

- Modern standards must retain salient information from existing standards.
- Modern standards must be clear, understandable and reassure the public of what they can expect from a nurse.
- Modern standards must adjust to meet evolving public and health care system realities and expectations.
- Clarity is required on the differences between practice standards and guidance, and the role guidance plays in nursing practice.
- Modern standards must reflect diversity, equity and inclusion principles and appropriate terminology.
- The Code of Conduct must be robust and comprehensive to contain necessary detail to support safe nursing practice.

² This is a CNO advisory group formed for the purposes of consultation on Standards Modernization. The group consists of nurses from different geographical regions, roles, practice settings and years of experience.



An Evolving Framework

The evidence and feedback continue to support a framework that focuses on:

- The Code of Conduct as the prominent and overarching practice standard with more topic specific standards underneath it that reflect accessibility, relevance and defensibility.

Next Steps

- In Fall 2021, Council can expect:
 - Continue to gather evidence to inform modifications to the framework
 - Socialize standards modernization project with key stakeholders
- In December 2021, Council can expect:
 - A modified framework and topic specific practice standards that would exist under the Code of Conduct
 - A stakeholder engagement plan

Questions for Council

Please share your feedback. What considerations would you like staff to keep in mind moving forward?