



Working with Unregulated Care Providers

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Regulatory Alignment

This resource has been collaboratively developed by the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan (RPNAS), the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Saskatchewan (CLPNS), and the College of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan (CRNS). The three nursing regulators acknowledge that all regulated nurses in Saskatchewan work collaboratively, within their legislated scopes of practice, with Unregulated Care Providers (UCP). This resource provides clear expectations and supports all regulated nurses to comply with legislation and practice standards, including those at the point of care, in education roles (both within academia and facility educators), and those in the administrative domain. The information contained within this document replaces previous direction provided about delegation and assignment to UCPs. The term Regulated nurse throughout the document refers to Licensed Practical Nurses [LPN], Registered Nurses [RN], and Registered Psychiatric Nurses [RPN]).

Purpose

Regulated nurses continuously work with other regulated and unregulated members of the health care team to provide nursing care in the interest of the public. The purpose of this resource is to provide direction for regulated nurses in utilizing the support of UCPs to fulfill care needs of individuals and patient populations. Individuals make up patient populations and individual patient needs must always be considered when assigning care.

Unregulated Care Provider

UCPs may have various titles, such as continuing care assistant, special care aide, health care aide, Indigenous support worker, special education assistant or others. This list is not exhaustive and names of UCPs may vary. Within the context of this document UCP refers specifically to those on the nursing team. The UCP:

- ☐ role description and required training is determined by the employer;
- ☐ may be formally educated or may have received training on the job, or a combination of both;
- ☐ provides services that assist with the delivery of nursing care; and
- ☐ is not registered or licensed by a regulatory body; consequently, they have no legally defined scope of practice.

Coordination of Care and Context of Practice

Regulated nurses are accountable to their clients, regulatory bodies and employers for providing safe, effective and ethical care. All regulated nurses in Saskatchewan are required to comply with their legislation and bylaws, practice standards, entry level competencies and code of ethics. Regulated nurses coordinate care to meet the needs of clients within their context of practice. This often involves working with UCPs to provide safe nursing care which is supported by job descriptions, employer policies, procedures, and clinical standards. Regulated nurses play a role in

supervision of UCPs in this context.

While working collaboratively, regulated nurses coordinate client care and determine which activities may be performed by UCPs within a specific context. It is an expectation of regulated nurses that they are aware of the UCP's job description, education and training, as well as the client's needs/condition in the coordination of care and application of the nursing process. As with all aspects of nursing care, the regulated nurse fulfills their responsibilities by applying the nursing process, which includes assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The following foundations apply:

- ☐ The provision of safe and effective nursing care is the primary focus when working collaboratively.
- ☐ Regulated nurses must work within their legislated scope of practice, employer policy and within their personal competency.
- ☐ Regulated nurses must be aware of relevant legislation and regulations.
- ☐ Regulated nurses apply the nursing process in all areas of practice and retain responsibility for all aspects of nursing care.
- ☐ Regulated nurses are responsible for the medication management process - including assessment, preparation, administration, and evaluation. While UCPs may assist regulated nurses with various aspects of the medication management process, UCP training does not prepare UCPs to independently manage all aspects of medication management and UCPs cannot assume responsibility for the various aspects of the medication management process, for one or all clients.
- ☐ The employer determines and is responsible for the policies, procedures, job description, skills and training required for UCPs.
- ☐ The regulated nurse and UCP work within employer policies, clinical standards, etc. to support a collaborative approach.
- ☐ No employer policy can relieve the regulated nurse of their professional accountabilities.
- ☐ Workplace environments support clear communication, teamwork and collaboration.
- ☐ Ongoing assessment of the specific client population, available resources in the environment and staffing levels that meet client needs supports safe and competent delivery of nursing services.
- ☐ Nursing activities assigned to UCPs cannot be reassigned by the UCP.
- ☐ Regulated nurses support UCPs to identify client needs beyond their personal competence.
- ☐ Regulated nurses support effective communication with UCPs to report patient information, concerns or questions back to the regulated nurse as part of their role in patient care.

Regulated Nursing Accountabilities

Working together, employers, managers and regulated nurses are accountable for creating processes to support client-focused care within collaborative health care teams.

Regulated nurses retain accountability for the decision to assign a nursing activity or activities to the UCP. Regulated nurses who are working with Graduate Nurses (GN), Graduate Licensed

Practice Nurses (GLPN) and/or Graduate Psychiatric Nurses (GPN) are encouraged to support the graduate's learning in assigning to UCPs while maintaining responsibility for the assignment as required by the regulated nurses' regulatory body. Additionally, regulated nurses consider the following:

- When assigning nursing care to a UCP, the regulated nurse will:
 - Work within employer processes to confirm:
 - the UCP's employer-determined range of duties
 - the UCP has been oriented and educated and is competent to support the collaborative care
 - Policies, procedures and clinical standards are in place to support the assignment.
 - Assess the client and use the nursing process and care plan to inform the decision to assign the care. Elements to consider:
 - The client has well-defined care needs, support systems and coping mechanisms;
 - The activity and client response has been established over time; and
 - The client's condition is [stable and predictable](#) and not expected to change.
 - Anticipate the intended outcomes and be aware of unintended consequences.
 - Identify and manage risks involved in performing the specific nursing activity.
 - Assist in determining the level of supervision required.
 - Reasonably assure the required resources are readily available for support, consultation, or intervention.
 - Support a collaborative approach to understand UCP's competence on an ongoing basis.
 - Determine with the UCP when, where and from whom the UCP should seek assistance and to whom the UCP should report the outcome of the nursing activity.
 - Adjust the assignment of nursing activity as required to support safe client care.
 - Report performance concerns to nursing manager.
- Provide ongoing supervision to the UCP knowing that:
 - Supervision is an active process of assigning, consulting, guiding, and monitoring an individual's performance of a nursing activity to influence the outcome of care (Canadian Nurses Protective Society [CNPS], 2012; College of Registered Nurses of Alberta [CARNA], 2019; Nova Scotia College of Nursing [NSCN], 2019).
 - The level and frequency of supervision must be determined by the regulated nurse assigning the nursing activities to the UCP and cannot be determined by the employer or agency policy.
 - Supervision needs may change over time as factors associated with the UCP's individual level of competence, the environment and client needs change (NSCN, 2019).
- Evaluate and communicate the effectiveness of the collaboration by reflecting on the following:
 - Was the assignment appropriate for the UCP?

- Was the client's outcome optimal, satisfactory or unsatisfactory?
 - Were there any problems or concerns; if so, how were they addressed?
 - Was communication timely and effective?
 - Does the plan of care need to be adjusted?
 - Were there any "learning moments" for the UCP and/or regulated nurse?
 - Was appropriate feedback provided to the UCP?
- Ultimately the decision to assign nursing activities to UCPs lies with the regulated nurse based on their assessment of the client in their particular environment.

Conclusion

Regulated nurses assign nursing activities to UCPs as part of working within a collaborative team to provide safe, competent and ethical client care. Regulated nurses retain responsibility for the remaining components of the nursing process and are accountable to their professional standards within the process of assigning nursing activities. Ongoing evaluation with a focus on what is in the client's best interest supports continuous quality improvement and positive outcomes for clients and families.

References

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