



Registered Nurse Practice Standards

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CRNS's Mandate and Purpose

The College of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan (CRNS) is a profession-led regulatory body established in 1917 by the provincial legislature. The CRNS is accountable through *The Registered Nurses Act, 1988* for public protection by ensuring members are safe, competent and ethical practitioners. One of the ways CRNS does this is by establishing standards for registered nurse (RN) practice.

RN Standards are broad and principle-based statements. The primary purpose of standards is to identify the basic level of performance expected of RNs in their practice, against which actual performance can be measured. It is the responsibility of all RNs in Saskatchewan to understand the standards and be accountable to apply them to their own nursing practice, regardless of roles or practice settings. Responsibility is the duty to satisfactorily complete their obligations. Accountability means the RN is capable of explaining why they did or did not meet these expectations.

Throughout this document, the term registered nurse refers to graduate nurse, GN; registered nurse, RN; graduate nurse practitioner, GNP; registered nurse with Additional Authorized Practice, RN(AAP); and nurse practitioner, NP.

RN Standards

Standards for registered nursing practice reflect the philosophical values of the profession, clarify what the registered nursing profession expects of its members and informs the public of acceptable practice of registered nurses. These standards apply to every setting and provide a benchmark for the basic level of safe registered nursing practice across Saskatchewan.

The five standards outlined in this document are paired with a list of indicators that describe how registered nurses demonstrate they are upholding the standard. The indicators are interrelated and provide specific criteria against which actual performance is measured.

The client (individual, a family, group, community or population) is central to each standard and to registered nursing practice. No one standard is more or less important than any other, and they are all related. Standards are developed in collaboration with members, the public and stakeholders and when examined alongside the RN entry-level competencies outline the basic expectations for RN practice in Saskatchewan.

It is important to note that no agency directive (policy, procedure or guideline) can relieve a registered nurse of the professional accountability for their own actions or decisions regarding the standards.

Overarching Principles

The standards statements are broad in nature, capturing the diverse practice settings and areas in which registered nurses practice.

The standards:

- apply at all times to all registered nurses in all practice roles and in all categories of registered nursing practice.
- provide guidance to assist registered nurses in their self-assessment as part of their continuing competence.
- may be used to develop position descriptions, performance appraisals and quality improvement tools.
- guide decision-making for registered nursing practice and when addressing professional practice issues.
- inform the public and others about what they can expect from practicing registered nurses.
- are used as a legal reference for reasonable and prudent registered nursing practice.

Practice Standards

Standard 1: Professional Responsibility and Accountability

The registered nurse is responsible for practicing safely, competently and ethically, and is accountable to the client, public, employer and profession.

The registered nurse upholds this standard by:

1. Being accountable and accepting responsibility for their own actions and decisions.
2. Consistently identifying self by first and last name and professional designation to clients, co-workers and others.
3. Recognizing the registered nurse scope of practice and individual competence limitations within the practice setting and seeking guidance as necessary.
4. Advocating for clear and consistent roles and responsibilities within the health care team.
5. Demonstrating effective collaborative practice, including communication, problem-solving strategies, decision-making and conflict resolution.
6. Advocating, intervening and participating with others, as needed, to ensure client safety.
7. Advocating and intervening in the client's best interest, and acting to protect client, self and others from actual or perceived harm.
8. Challenging and taking action on unclear or questionable orders, decisions or actions made by other health care team members.
9. Practicing in accordance with agency policy and legislation, and in a timely manner, recognizes and reports near misses and errors (own and others), adverse events and critical incidents, and taking action to stop and minimize harm.
10. Contributing to the development and integration of quality improvement principles and activities into nursing practice.
11. Participating in the analysis, development, implementation and evaluation of practice and policy that guides delivery of care.

Standard 2. Knowledge-Based Practice

The registered nurse practices using evidence-informed knowledge, skills and judgment from diverse sources of knowledge and ways of knowing.

The registered nurse upholds this standard by:

12. Applying a knowledge base from nursing in the practice of registered nursing.
13. Applying knowledge from other disciplines through interprofessional collaboration and decision-making in the best interest of the client.
14. Applying knowledge from nursing and other disciplines concerning current and emerging health care issues.
15. Facilitating client engagement in identifying their health needs, strengths, capacities and goals.
16. Incorporating knowledge that reflects a deep understanding and respect for different ways of knowing which exhibits cultural competence/cultural humility.
17. Anticipating potential health problems or issues for clients, the possible consequences and responding appropriately.

18. Proactively seeking new information and knowledge, employing a critical inquiry process and utilizing best practice in the provision of registered nursing care.
19. Coordinating the health care team to analyze and organize complex health challenges into manageable components for health care planning.
20. Evaluating the effectiveness of nursing interventions at the point of care to modify and individualize client care.
21. Utilizing knowledge of the health care system to improve health care services.
22. Utilizing nursing informatics and other information and communications technology in practicing safe registered nursing care.
23. Contributing to a collaborative health research culture by conducting, participating in, implementing and evaluating evidence-informed findings into practice.
24. Demonstrating knowledge of primary health care in health delivery systems and its significance for population health.
25. Demonstrating knowledge of the determinants of health, how these affect clients, and the way in which registered nursing practice can facilitate positive health outcomes.

Standard 3: Ethical Practice

The registered nurse applies the principles in the current *CRNS Code of Conduct* when making practice decisions and using professional judgment. The registered nurse engages in critical inquiry to inform clinical decision-making, and establishes therapeutic caring and culturally-safe relationships with clients and the health care team.

The registered nurse upholds this standard by:

26. Practicing in accordance with the current *CRNS Code of Conduct*.
27. Identifying the effect of own values, beliefs and experiences in relationships with clients, recognizing and addressing potential conflicts.
28. Practicing a holistic client/family-centred approach ensuring culturally-safe client care.
29. Communicating respectfully and effectively in collaboration with client, family, colleagues and others, and resolving conflict should it occur.
30. Upholding and maintaining professional boundaries, privacy, and confidentiality with clients.
31. Advocating in the best interest of clients to help achieve positive health outcomes, especially when they are unable to advocate for themselves.
32. Using an ethical and reasoned decision-making process to address situations of ethical distress and dilemmas.
33. Promoting and protecting a client's right to autonomy, respect, privacy dignity and access to information.
34. Taking action to create a safe work environment that contributes to healthy teams and optimal client outcomes.

Standard 4: Service to the Public

The registered nurse demonstrates leadership in quality and ethical nursing practice, delivery of health care services and establishing professional relationships.

The registered nurse upholds this standard by:

35. Demonstrating professional presence and modelling professional behaviour.
36. Listening respectfully to the expressed needs of clients, families and others.
37. Contributing to a professional ethical and safe practice environment to support the provision of optimal health care outcomes.
38. Integrating infection prevention and control principles, standards and guidelines in providing care and service to protect the health and well-being of clients, co-workers and the public.
39. Articulating the authority and scope of practice of the registered nurse.
40. Providing and supporting leadership in nursing for optimal coordination and provision of care.
41. Participating and contributing to health care team development by:
 - a. building partnerships based on respect for the unique and shared competencies of each team member; and
 - b. contributing registered nursing perspectives on issues being addressed by the health care team.
42. Advocating individually and collectively for public participation in defining and supporting the health care needs at all levels of health care delivery.
43. Managing resources to provide safe, effective and efficient care.
44. Supporting professional efforts in registered nursing to promote health and prevent disease to achieve a healthier society.
45. Utilizing knowledge of the health care system to improve health care services at any or all of the following levels: practice setting or program; agency; regional/municipal; provincial/territorial level; and national/international.
46. Advocating for and promoting healthy public policy and social justice.
47. Advocating for and participating in emergency preparedness planning and working collaboratively with others to develop and implement plans to facilitate the protection of the public.
48. Acting as a formal and/or informal mentor to registered nurses, nursing students and colleagues to enhance and support professional growth.

Standard 5: Self-Regulation

The registered nurse demonstrates an accountability to regulate themselves in accordance with their legislated scope of practice.

The registered nurse upholds this standard by:

49. Practicing in accordance with *The Registered Nurses Act, 1988*, other current relevant legislation, bylaws, scope of practice, standards, entry-level competencies, guidelines and employer policies.
50. Assuming the responsibility for fulfilling the requirements of the CRNS Continuing Competence Program.
51. Recognizing and addressing professional practice, legal or ethical violations by themselves or others in a timely and appropriate manner.
52. Supporting health care team members who reasonably report practice, legal or ethical violations by themselves or others to employers or the appropriate regulatory body.
53. Reporting to employers and/or the appropriate regulatory body concerns related to professional incompetence, professional misconduct and/or incapacity of registered nurses and/or other health care providers.
54. Collaborating with the employer and other organizations as needed to resolve professional practice issues.
55. Taking measures to maintain fitness to practice ensuring client safety is not compromised.

