

Controlled Acts

An Overview

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The College of Nurses of Ontario presents **Controlled Acts: An Overview**.



Introduction

The *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, identifies the controlled acts.

Nurses have the authority to perform a number of controlled acts.

Refer to the College's *Authorizing Mechanisms* practice guideline.



You hear a lot about controlled acts, but do you actually know what they are? The *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, defines a controlled act as an activity that can cause harm if it is performed by an unqualified person.

As a nurse, you have the authority to perform a number of controlled act procedures. This webcast will explain these, and how you get the authority to perform a controlled act procedure. We've included practice examples so you can get a clear idea of what we mean.

This presentation refers to the College's *Authorizing Mechanisms* practice guideline. You will find it helpful to review the document while you watch the webcast.

This is one of four presentations about controlled acts. The other webcasts are overviews of:

Initiation
Delegation, and
Orders.



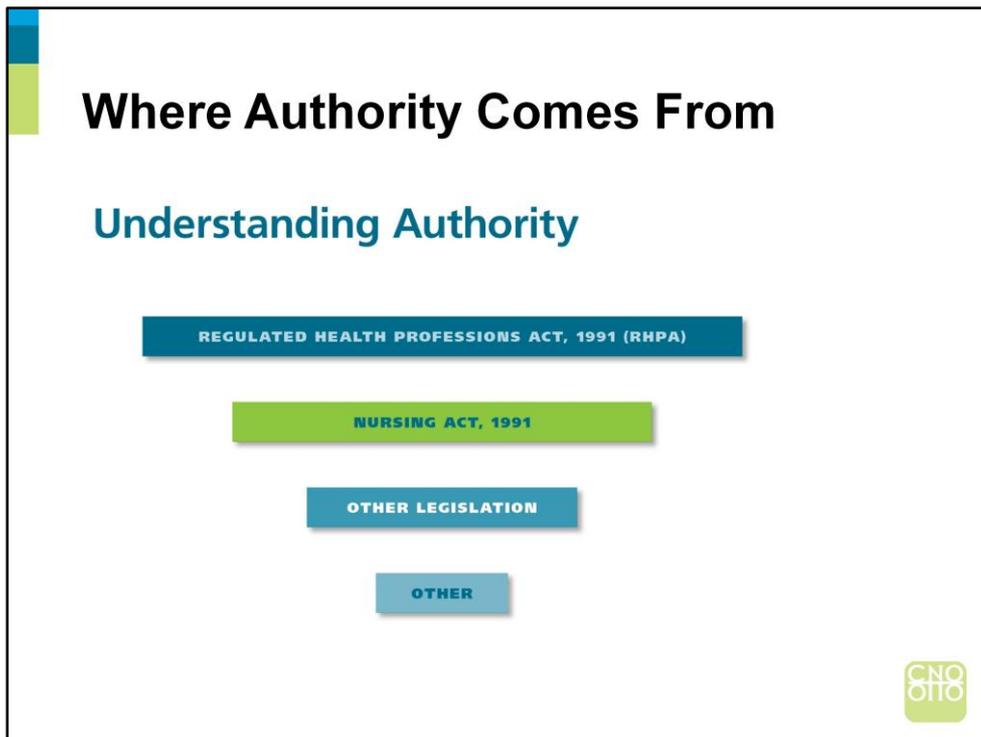
Learning Objectives

- Understand where authority comes from to perform a controlled act.
- Know which controlled acts are authorized to RNs, RPNs and NPs.
- Identify the three ways you get the authority to perform a controlled act procedure.



After watching this webcast, you should:

- Understand where you get the authority to perform a controlled act
- Know which controlled acts are authorized to Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses and Nurse Practitioners, and
- Identify the three ways you get the authority to perform a controlled act procedure.



All nurses need the authority to perform a controlled act procedure. You get this authority from legislation.

The main legislation is the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, also known as the RHPA. This act identifies the controlled acts that can be performed by all health care professionals in Ontario.

Next is the *Nursing Act, 1991*. This act states which of the controlled acts are authorized to nursing and the conditions that must exist for a nurse to perform them.

Then there is other legislation. There are certain activities performed in health care that are not captured under the controlled acts but are authorized by other legislation.

For example, ordering or operating an X-ray machine is authorized by the *Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act*. Ordering a lab test is defined by the *Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act*.

There is also legislation that applies to practice settings. For example, *the Public Hospitals Act* has requirements for activities performed in hospitals.

What else gives nurses authority? Practice setting policies that decide “who can do what.” These types of policies should be consistent with legislation.



Controlled Acts for All Nurses

- Performing a prescribed procedure below the dermis or mucous membrane
- Administering a substance by injection or inhalation
- Dispensing



Now, let's look at the controlled acts authorized to all nurses.

We will start with *Performing a prescribed procedure below the dermis or mucous membrane*. Examples of this controlled act include:

- inserting IVs
- venipuncture to collect blood samples, and
- performing wound care below the dermis.

Applying a bandage on an abrasion or skin tear is not considered a controlled act.

Another controlled act is *Administering a substance by injection or inhalation*. Injection examples include intramuscular, subcutaneous or intradermal injections. Inhalation therapy examples include oxygen administration, nebulizers or puffers.

Next is *Dispensing*. Unlike the other controlled acts, nurses cannot delegate dispensing of a medication. For more information on dispensing, go to the College's website.

We are frequently asked if administering a medication by an oral or topical route is considered a controlled act. No, this is not a controlled act.



Controlled Acts for All Nurses

Putting an instrument, hand or finger:

- i. Beyond the external ear canal
- ii. Beyond the point in the nasal passages where they normally narrow
- iii. Beyond the larynx
- iv. Beyond the opening of the urethra
- v. Beyond the labia majora
- vi. Beyond the anal verge
- vii. Into an artificial opening into the body



Another controlled act authorized to all nurses is *Putting an instrument, hand or finger in any of the openings of the body* that are listed on the slide.

An example of a procedure into an artificial opening of the body is the suctioning of a tracheostomy.

Inserting a urinary catheter is an example of putting an instrument beyond the opening of the urethra.

Inserting a rectal suppository is an example of putting a finger beyond the anal verge.

An example of going beyond the point in the nasal passages where they normally narrow is the insertion of an NG tube.

And, the insertion of a speculum is an example of a procedure that is beyond the labia majora.

Controlled Acts for NPs

- Communicating a diagnosis
- Applying or ordering the application of a prescribed form of energy
- Setting or casting a fracture or joint dislocation
- Prescribing, dispensing, selling or compounding medication in accordance with regulations

Refer to the College's *Nurse Practitioner* practice standard.



In addition to the previous controlled acts, Nurse Practitioners are authorized to perform additional controlled acts.

They are:

- Communicating a diagnosis made by the NP
- Applying or ordering the application of a prescribed form of energy
- Setting or casting a fracture or joint dislocation, and
- Prescribing, dispensing, selling or compounding medication.

Although all nurses have access to the controlled act of dispensing, only an NP has access to the controlled acts of prescribing, selling and compounding.



How You Get the Authority

Three authorizing mechanisms:

1. Orders
2. Delegation
3. Initiation



There are three ways that you get the authority to perform a controlled act procedure. These are called authorizing mechanisms.

-First is an order. This is when you get the authority to perform a controlled act from a physician, Nurse Practitioner, dentist, midwife or chiropractor. There are two types of orders: direct and a directive. A direct order is specific to a client. A directive is an order that can be used for a number of people when certain conditions exist. Examples include a directive for the treatment of urinary tract infections or the ordering of routine blood work.

-Second is delegation. This is a process where you receive the authority to perform a controlled act that is not authorized to nursing. This happens when a health care professional legally transfers the authority to perform the controlled act to you. For example, when a physician delegates to you the performance of allergy challenge testing.

Nurses can also use delegation to legally transfer the authority to perform a nursing controlled act to someone who does not have access to it. For example, you may transfer your authority to perform wound care to an unregulated care provider, such as a family member or personal support worker.

Third is initiation, when the procedure is one that you have the authority to initiate yourself.

This is just a brief overview of the authorizing mechanisms. For more in-depth information and practice examples, watch the Orders, Delegation and Initiation webcasts.



Related College Documents

- Authorizing Mechanisms
- Decisions About Procedures and Authority
- Working With Unregulated Care Providers
- Nurse Practitioner
- An Introduction to the *Nursing Act, 1991*
- RHPA: Scope of Practice, Controlled Acts Model

www.cno.org/publications



If you want more information on controlled acts and the ways you get authority to perform them, then review the College documents listed on the slide.

All of these documents can be found on the College's website.



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