August 29, 2016

The College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) has changed the processes it uses to fulfil its role in ensuring that nurses suffering from substance use or mental health disorders are practising nursing safely. The changes meet both CNO’s obligations to its members under Ontario’s *Human Rights Code* and its obligation to protect the public. As an employer, the greatest difference you will notice is to the information about a nurse that is available to you on the public register, *Find a Nurse*.

**Changes to the Fitness to Practise process**

A nurse can volunteer to obtain treatment and restrict their nursing practice. By volunteering to enter into this agreement with CNO, the nurse is demonstrating their commitment to ensuring their health condition doesn’t affect their ability to practise nursing safely. CNO will only enter into these agreements if it believes it’s appropriate for the nurse and that the public will be protected.

If a nurse is currently unable to practise nursing safely, they can voluntarily surrender their certificate of registration with CNO. They won’t be able to return to nursing practice until their treating health care professionals are of the opinion that they have recovered to the point that they’re able to practise nursing safely. By voluntarily surrendering their certificate, the nurse is showing they recognize that they need appropriate treatment before they can return safely to nursing.

A nurse who does not voluntarily agree to obtain treatment and restrict their nursing practice or surrender their certificate of registration may have terms, conditions and limitations imposed or be suspended by the Fitness to Practise Committee of CNO.

**Changes to the public register**

You will see changes to the appearance of *Find a Nurse* for all nurses who previously went through the Fitness to Practise process as well as for nurses who will undergo this new process.

CNO will post restrictions about a nurse’s practice on *Find a Nurse*, but will not post more personal health information about a nurse than is reasonably necessary to protect the public interest. Information that will be posted includes, for example, restrictions on nursing practice that a nurse has voluntarily agreed to, or whether a nurse has voluntarily surrendered their certificate of registration or has been suspended, and is not entitled to practise.

Any restrictions posted on *Find a Nurse* for a particular nurse will be removed when such a posting is no longer required to protect the public.

If you have any questions about the Fitness to Practise process, please contact CNO’s Monitoring team at:

Phone: 416-928-0900 ext. 7683
Toll free: 1-800-387-5526 ext. 7683
Fax: 416-928-1914
Email: monitoring@cnomail.org