

COLLEGE OF NURSES OF ONTARIO'S Academic Reference Group

News to Use: June 2024

What is the Academic Reference Group?

The Academic Reference Group is made up of academic stakeholders and representatives of the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) who share information and collaborate on nursing regulatory issues of mutual interest and concern.

The group includes 12 Ontario nursing educators who have volunteered to represent all nursing programs in the province.

The goal of the group is to provide an opportunity for discussion and collaboration on regulatory issues of importance to both educators and the College of Nurses of Ontario.

Welcome

We appreciate your time and thank you for your continued engagement as a member of the Academic Reference Group.

New Director of Professional Practice

On June 4, Maya Nikoloski joined CNO as Director, Professional Practice. Maya is a Registered Nurse who has held progressive leadership positions in professional practice and education. Most recently, she was the Senior Director, Practice and Education, Nursing with the Sinai Health System at Hennick Bridgepoint Hospital. Please join us in welcoming Maya to her new role. Maya is hoping to join our next ARG meeting in October 2024.

Program Approval

At the June meeting, Council approved all entry-level programs based on the recently completed annual and comprehensive reviews. There was also one new nursing program which received preliminary approval. Please let us know if you have not received your program's approval status notification following the Council meeting. The list of [approved nursing programs](#) has been updated based on Council's decisions.

CNO expects to review more new programs throughout 2024. To start the [preliminary approval](#) process, please email [Donna Rawlin](#), Education Team Lead, regarding your intent to offer a new program(s) at least one year before commencing the program.

Registration exams

CNO has recently shared Q1 2024 REx-PN and NCLEX-RN exam reports, along with your program's test plan blueprint results for 2023. If you have any difficulty accessing any of these exam reports, please contact [Sean Knight](#).

If you wish to meet with us to discuss your exam results, please contact the Education Consultant assigned to your program and/or [Donna Rawlin](#), Education Team Lead.

Nurse Practitioner Regulation Framework Implementation Plan Project (NPR-FIPP)

CNO, the Canadian Council of Registered Nurse Regulators (CCRNRR) and system partners are collaborating on a national Nurse Practitioner (NP) regulation framework to support a consistent regulatory approach across Canadian jurisdictions. The initiative will change Ontario's framework for registering NPs by removing the specialty certificates (NP-Primary Health Care, NP-Paediatrics, NP-Adult) and replacing them with one NP category. In this model, regulators will no

GROUP MEMBERS

We encourage you to share your feedback with any member of the Academic

Reference Group:

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longer regulate different categories of NP practice but will continue to require NPs to practice within their individual competence and regulated scope of practice.

As health system needs evolve, this change to a singular NP category will provide the flexibility to deliver innovative and accessible services across patient populations. This change will enable the appropriate level of regulation in the public's interest and foster a more mobile and responsive NP workforce – one that enables NPs to move and progress across practice settings, domains of practice and employers.

CNO will continue to engage with NPs and other relevant system partners to support robust discussions and collaboration on key deliverables, outcomes, risk and implementation timelines.

Current activities include:

- Completion of the national NP practice analysis validation survey. Results from the practice analysis survey will be shared with NPs and system partners in the coming months.
- Based on findings from the practice analysis, developing a national NP entry-level examination by the exam vendor (Meazure Learning) and subject matter experts. The tentative date for the completion of an exam blueprint is the end of 2024 or the beginning of 2025.

In early summer, we will launch a new cno.org webpage outlining the national work, key milestones, engagement opportunities and frequently asked questions. Stay tuned for more details!

RN prescribing

Registered Nurses (RNs) in Ontario have the option to expand their scope of practice under the *Nursing Act, 1991*, to prescribe specific medication and communicate diagnoses for the purpose of prescribing those medications. To become authorized to prescribe medications as an RN in the General Class in Ontario, RNs must complete a [CNO approved prescribing education program](#). These programs are offered post-registration and are not part of entry-level RN competencies. To support this scope expansion and system change, CNO continues to update practice resources with input from key partners including approved RN prescribing programs.

In May, CNO invited a sample of RN General Class members to participate in a survey about RN prescribing. This survey asked about RNs' intent (for example, if they plan to take prescribing education) and attitudes towards RN prescribing. Stay tuned to future updates from the CNO with more information and survey highlights about RN prescribing.

Discontinuing or Declining to Provide Care standard

This [new standard](#) replaces the *Refusing Assignments and Discontinuing Nursing Services* guideline that was retired in 2023. The difference between the guideline and the new standard is that while the guideline provided practice considerations, the standard describes professional accountabilities applicable to all nurses in all practice settings.

The new document was developed in consultation with nurse and health care partners, who requested clarity on the subject with easy-to-understand language. The new standard includes links to other standards and practice resources, along with a glossary with key terms.

Education regulation changes

At a special meeting on Wednesday, May 15, Council approved, for submission to government, proposed changes under the *Nursing Act, 1991*, to amend the registration requirements related to education that applicants need to practice in Ontario. The proposed changes are particularly significant for applicants who are educated internationally.

The proposed changes, if approved, will require Registered Nurse (RN) applicants to have a nursing baccalaureate degree recognized or approved in any jurisdiction. For Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) applicants, the minimum qualification will be a nursing diploma, which also needs to be recognized or approved in any jurisdiction. For applicants below these minimum requirements, further assessment will be conducted by CNO, and the applicant will be provided with options to meet the education requirement for the category to which they have applied.

The regulations also introduce a new registration requirement for applicants to complete a course that supports successful transition into Ontario's health care system. CNO will now submit these regulations to the Ministry of Health for consideration. These regulations will take effect only after Ministry review and government approval. [Learn more.](#)

Quality Assurance

CNO has updated the [Quality Assurance \(QA\) Program](#) website based on feedback from nurses. This includes greater transparency on what QA Assessment entails if they are selected. There were 2500 nurses randomly chosen for the April 2024 selection. The QA Program continues to scale up and there will be another QA Assessment cycle in September 2024.

If selected for QA Assessment, nurses will be contacted by email, using the email on file in [Maintain Your Membership](#). If you have any questions, please email QAassessment@CNOmail.org for additional support.

Workforce Census update

This year CNO launched its first Workforce Census to better understand the composition and experiences of nurses in Ontario. The survey closed in March with more than 31,000 responses. Data analysis is now underway and will continue throughout the summer.

To ensure we can apply the necessary level of rigour to the analysis and share the information in a timely way, CNO will release the results in stages. The first report, to be released in October 2024, will summarize the identity, practice and employment characteristics of nurses in Ontario. A second report will focus on the experience of nurses in the workplace and with CNO. It will be released during the first quarter of 2025. [Learn more.](#)

ARG membership recruitment

CNO continues to recruit new members for a three-year term. We are targeting university-based program representatives from diverse areas across the province that don't already have representation on the ARG committee. This is to maintain equitable representation between colleges and universities. [Learn more](#) about CNO's recruitment for new members.



CNO extends a big thank you to all current ARG members for their ongoing participation and support. Your involvement helps inform our regulatory role and ensures Ontario nursing education program graduates are ready to practice safely and competently.

Council updates

Read the [June Council meeting materials](#).

Please share this update with other nursing educators at your school.