

COLLEGE OF NURSES OF ONTARIO'S Academic Reference Group

News to Use: Q1 2026

Regulatory Changes and Updates

Modernizing Standards

To support the revised [Documentation](#) practice standard, which will take effect on February 1, 2026, a webinar providing an overview of the revised standard is now available on our website in [French](#) and [English](#). In addition to the webinar, several new resources have been developed to support nurses with the application of the standard:

- [Abbreviations in documentation](#)
- [Charting by exception](#)
- [Designated recorder and cosigning](#)

Upcoming Webinar

The newly revised ***Professional Boundaries and Nurse-Client Relationships*** practice standard (formerly *Therapeutic Nurse-Client Relationships*) was approved by the CNO Council in December. The webinar will provide an overview of the revised practice standard and include time for questions. Please note that a recorded version of the webinar will also be available on our website following the presentation in both French and English.

The webinar will take place on **February 11, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. (ET)**, and is available through [this link](#). *No registration is required*, but space will be limited.

An e-blast will also go out to all nurses to notify them of the webinar.

As previously communicated, the revised practice standard is now available on our [website](#) and will go into effect on **March 1, 2026**. For additional updates and resources, including FAQs supporting this transition, visit [CNO.org](#).

Upcoming Practice Standard Revisions

CNO has started the revision process for the *Nurse Practitioner Standard* and *Confidentiality and Privacy Standard*. An open and targeted consultation will follow for these revisions, following presentation of the content to Council.

National RN & RPN ELC Revision Project

As previously communicated, the national Registered Nurse (RN) and Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) Entry-Level Competencies (ELCs) are currently undergoing revision (updated every 5 years). The revision process is led by the Canadian Council of Registered Nurse Regulators (CCNR) and the Canadian Council of Practical Nurse Regulators (CCPNR), in collaboration with all jurisdictions.

To date, activities have included consultations with steering committee members, primary informant interviews, a membership survey across all jurisdictions to capture insights on current ELCs, literature and jurisdictional review, secondary informant interviews, and a two-day in-person working meeting with both RPN and RN steering committees, to draft and revise ELCs.

The revised ELC draft documents will:

- Reflect current and future-forward nursing practice;
- Include enhanced language to strengthen shared understanding and reduce interpretive variability;
- Include modifications to the existing ELCs and integration of new ELCs reflecting emerging areas of nursing practice and healthcare, such as, genomics and precision health;
- Lastly, the RPN ELCs will be transitioning to a role-based framework, which aims to enhance alignment and consistency across all nursing designations (RN and NP ELCs).

In the coming months, we will circulate further communication regarding the National Validation Survey, tentatively scheduled for March 2026. This survey will be shared with our members and system partners to collect feedback on the draft RN and RPN ELCs. This is a critical opportunity for you to share your input. Additionally, CNO will seek input from our system partners to inform resource development and the timeline for integrating the revised ELCs into your programs. Together, we aim to ensure a smooth and efficient transition to the updated ELCs.

Stay tuned for more information and communications.

Single NP Classification Update

The government has approved changes to the NP regulations to move to one classification of NP, effective July 1, 2026. CNO Council approved the new NP registration exam, *Canadian Licensure Nurse Practitioner Examination (CLNPE)*, effective July 1, 2026. No word yet on whether Council will continue to approve the American Family Nurse Practitioner exam. Likely a decision at the March 2026 Council meeting.

Please read [this article](#) for more information.

SPEP Evaluation

In partnership with the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health, CNO launched the Supervised Practice Experience Partnership (SPEP) program in January 2022 to enhance opportunities related to registration and enable applicants to fulfill the evidence of practice or evidence of practice and language proficiency registration requirements.

CNO is pleased to share an [evaluation report](#) examining the impact of the SPEP program. The report covers data from the first three years (Jan. 1, 2022 – Jan. 1, 2025) and assesses the impact on health human resources, the experience of key groups of participants and investigates the relationship between SPEP participation and nursing practice concerns.

The SPEP program is an innovative solution that has helped to increase nursing resources across the province. Some key findings from the report include:

- 4,183 applicants completed the program and became registered during the first three years,
- 72% of surveyed placement employers reported hiring their candidate after program completion, and
- The opportunity for applicants to improve knowledge and skills and to gain experience in the Canadian health care system were benefits reported by key participant groups.

You can find the evaluation report along with additional nursing data and reports on our [Nursing Statistics webpage](#).

New Release from the Workforce Census

In October 2025, CNO published a new set of results from the Workforce Census that describe nurses' experiences with racism, gender-based discrimination, and ageism in their practice. Findings were based on the Workforce Census survey, which collected data from over 31,000 nurses in the General, Extended, and Non-Practising classes about their identities and experiences in the nursing profession in Ontario.

Our findings support existing knowledge on systemic inequities in nursing, as documented in clinical practice, academic literature, and previous research initiatives across the province. We hope our new findings will strengthen the growing body of evidence that supports the importance of fostering equitable and inclusive workplaces for all nurses. [You can access the information sheets here](#).

Upcoming webinar for Students and New Graduates

CNO is planning a webinar for students and new graduates, focusing on the Registration Process, in early Spring. A great opportunity for students to learn about how to register and ask questions. Stay tuned for more information about dates and times.

Did You Know?

CNO's Education team supports academics with presentations about nursing regulation, Standards of nursing practice, and related educational content for students. If your organization would like to arrange a virtual or in-person presentation, please contact the Education team at education@cnomail.org for more information.

Council Updates

For more information please check our website: [Council Meeting Minutes](#).

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