

Introduction

About the College of Nurses

The College of Nurses is responsible for regulating the approximately 160,000 nurses in Ontario. Its mission is regulating nursing in the public interest.

Only individuals with a valid certificate of registration and current College membership are legally entitled to practise nursing in Ontario and use the protected titles “nurse,” “Registered Nurse” (RN), “Registered Practical Nurse” (RPN) and/or “Nurse Practitioner” (NP).

Every member of the College is responsible for practising in accordance with the standards of the profession, and for keeping current and competent throughout her or his nursing career.

The *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* and the *Nursing Act, 1991* provide the legislative framework for regulating nursing in Ontario.

The College's role

The following are the College's four regulatory functions:

1. **Articulating and promoting practice standards.** Nursing standards inform nurses of their accountabilities and inform the public of what to expect of nurses. Standards apply to all nurses regardless of their role, job description or area of practice.
2. **Establishing requirements for entry to practice.** These requirements assure the public and employers that individuals who enter the nursing profession in Ontario have the necessary knowledge, skill and judgment to provide safe care.
3. **Administering a Quality Assurance Program.** Participation in the College's QA Program is a legislative requirement for all Ontario nurses. The QA Program supports nurses in their efforts to practise according to the practice standards and to improve their practice continually. It facilitates the ongoing self-assessment and continued competence of members, and supports the public's confidence in the nursing profession.
4. **Enforcing standards of practice and conduct.** Public protection is maintained when nurses are accountable and members of the public have the opportunity to express concerns about the nursing care they have received. The College responds to concerns about nursing care in a number of ways, and it makes every attempt to ensure the resolution, investigation and hearing processes are efficient and fair to all parties.

Council

The College's governing Council is composed of nurses elected by their peers and members of the public appointed by the provincial government. Council establishes, in accordance with legislation, the goals and objectives of the College, and makes decisions about how the nursing profession is regulated in the public interest.

Statutory Committees

To support its regulatory functions, the College has five statutory committees comprised of nurses and public members. The committees are as follows:

- **Discipline:** Holds hearings in cases in which a member of the College has been referred by the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee because of the serious nature of alleged professional misconduct and/or incompetence.
- **Fitness to Practise:** Determines whether a nurse is suffering from a physical or mental condition or disorder that is affecting, or could affect, her or his practice, and if so what action may be necessary to protect the public.
- **Inquiries, Complaints and Reports:** Screens matters related to public complaints or information the College receives through reports and determines whether a hearing is required or if some other action would address the public interest.
- **Quality Assurance:** Responsible for ensuring that members comply with all aspects of the QA Program.
- **Registration:** Determines whether applicants

are qualified to practise nursing in Ontario or if further actions are needed to meet registration requirements.

Supports for nurses

The College provides a variety of services and resources to members who wish to enhance their understanding of nursing practice.

The College's website (www.cno.org)

On our website, members can:

- complete all tasks related to maintaining College membership, such as renewing their membership annually and updating personal information
- access resources and information about the QA Program
- download all College documents and publications, including *The Standard* and all practice standards and guidelines
- access a variety of educational tools designed to assess and update nurses' knowledge of practice documents
- submit questions about nursing to the Practice Support team.
- learn about opportunities to volunteer for College projects, apply for a committee or run for Council.

Contacting the College

Do you have a general inquiry about the College or a question about your status as a member of the College? The Customer Service Call Centre is open from 0830 to 1630 hrs, Monday to Friday.

Phone: 416 928-0900
(toll-free in Ontario 1 800 387-5526)
Email: cno@cnomail.org

Do you have a question about how to apply a specific standard to your practice setting? Contact Practice Support.
Email: practicesupport@cnomail.org

Do you want to discuss a professional conduct issue? Call a College Investigator.

Phone: 416 928-0900 ext. 6988
(toll-free in Ontario 1 800 387-5526)
Email: investigations-intake@cnomail.org