



Employer Reference Group Terms of Reference

Background

Nurse Employers play a critical role in supporting the regulatory functions of the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) and public safety. As a stakeholder group, they have accountabilities in overseeing nurse compliance with Standards and Guidelines, Quality Assurance and the Professional Conduct process. In addition, nurse employers are imperative to the mandatory reporting process and monitoring programs of the CNO. Advanced Practice Nurses and Administrators, including non-nursing and human resources professionals also play a role in supporting the regulatory functions of the CNO.

Enhancing employer understanding about the importance of their role in public protection and in supporting the public's confidence in self-regulation has been noted in the literature. (Ismail, Clarke, 2014). Further, collaborative efforts between regulators and employers has been shown to produce positive outcomes related to supporting regulatory functions (O'Neill-Blackwell, 2012, CRNBC, 2012; Lahey, 2009).

The Employer Reference Group is proposed as one of a number of strategies to enhance professional collaboration, improve education and consultation related to regulatory issues and accountability.

Purpose

The main objectives of the Employer Reference Group is for CNO and nursing employers to:

- Discuss and collaborate on regulatory related topics of mutual interest
- Clarify the role of the CNO and Employers related to public protection
- Identify opportunities for support related to policy, the standards, guidelines, mandatory reporting and professional conduct processes
- Propose recommendations for consideration related to regulatory work

Scope

The Employer Reference Group is focused on supporting nursing regulation in Ontario, and any resulting impact on the employers of nurses. Information collected from the group will be used to inform all phases of nursing regulation (i.e. planning to evaluation). The exchange of information will support nursing employers to be further informed about nursing regulation and to enhance the College's ability to regulate nursing in the public interest.



The reference group provides one mechanism for CNO and employers to engage with each other, disseminate and gather input on strategic and operational matters (related to the topic discussed).

The levels of engagement for this reference group will be to inform, consult and involve nurse employers.

The first phase of engagement will be to provide nurse employers with a survey to understand needs and opportunities that will result from engagement. Areas that are not within the purview of the CNO would be considered out of scope, including and not limited to:

- labour relations
- staffing

These matters, in addition to employer-member specific concerns would be addressed elsewhere.

Roles and Responsibilities

The reference group will consist of CNO staff and nursing employers in Ontario. The group will be chaired by a CNO staff member.

The Chair is responsible for:

- preparing meeting agendas, supporting materials (such as information and briefing materials on topics for discussion), and reporting outcomes of meetings to CNO
- facilitating meetings that promote respectful and inclusive dialogue.

Participants are responsible for:

- meeting preparation (reviewing agenda and supporting material), providing input into agenda items (including submitting any documentation as needed), engaging in respectful and inclusive dialogue at meetings, and participating in any evaluations related to the reference group
- clearly identifying any conflict of interest with agenda items to the Chair.

Selection and qualifications of participants

CNO selects participants for the reference group in a way that ensures incorporation of:

- a range of knowledge and experience of nursing, including education from practical nursing, undergraduate nursing, and nurse practitioner areas



- a range of knowledge and experience in the role of nurse employer, including senior management , middle management, advanced practice
- geographical diversity and language (French and English) representation

CNO will conduct a formal selection process every three years. Applicants are required to complete an online application form, and are selected based on the criteria listed above.

Membership and Terms of Membership

- Participation in the group is voluntary.
- The designated number of nurse employer participants for the reference group is 10-12 (no alternates).
- A participant's membership in the group ends if they miss two consecutive meeting without notifying the Chair, or cease employment, or become an employee of CNO and/or member of CNO's council.
- A rotation of one-third the membership every two years is expected.
- Quorum for any decision-making (e.g., agenda, meeting minutes) is 50% +1

Meeting/schedule

The reference group will meet quarterly by teleconference (using supportive technology, such as WebEx, as needed).

Meeting agendas will be circulated at least one week in advance of the meeting date, along with pre-reading material. Meeting topics will focus on identified priorities, selected by members and approved by the chair.

Meeting notes will be circulated no more than 14 business days after a meeting. Meeting notes will provide key discussion points, actions items, and responsibility for follow-up.

Reporting and sharing of information

Meeting summaries and findings will be distributed to the relevant CNO teams and shared with CNO's Council as appropriate.

Group participants are encouraged to share agreed upon key messages with their colleagues, organisations and various networks. Certain items shared (such as, draft documents) may require confidentiality and will be restricted from circulation beyond the reference group.



Evaluation

A formal evaluation of the reference group will occur on an annual basis.

Others

The group will review the Terms of Reference annually.

Members of the reference group may establish ad hoc groups to address topics or emerging needs.

References

College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia. (2012). *Underlying philosophies and trends affecting professional regulation*. Vancouver, Canada: Author.

Ismail, F., Clarke, S. (2014). *Improving the Employer-Regulator Partnership: An Analysis of Employer Engagement in Discipline Monitoring*. *Journal of Nursing Regulation*, 5(3).

Lahey, W. (2009). *Collaborative self-regulation and professional accountability in Nova Scotia's health care system*. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Nova Scotia Health Professions Regulatory Network.

O'Neill-Blackwell, J. (2012). *Engage-The trainer's guide to learning styles*. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.