

Discussion Note – December 2020 Council Modernizing Practice Standards

Contact for Questions

Kevin McCarthy, Director of Strategy

Public Interest Rationale

CNO's purpose is to protect the public by promoting safe nursing practice. The standards of practice set the foundation for how we regulate; therefore, they are integral to achieving our purpose. Standards that are aligned with our public protection purpose will reflect:

- current evidence
- regulatory best practices
- current and evolving nursing practice / health system realities, and
- changing public expectations and societal values.

Modernizing standards of practice will support CNO's proactive approach to regulation, strengthening our position as a system partner in patient safety.

Introduction

The purpose of this item is to introduce Council to a new strategic initiative to modernize CNO's standards of practice. Staff are seeking early feedback from Council to shape next steps.

Background

CNO's [standards of practice](#) are the benchmark for safe and ethical nursing practice. The standards inform nurses of their accountabilities. They also inform the public of what to expect from nurses. CNO's standards are complemented by practice guidelines and web-based practice resources (for example, webcasts, frequently asked questions), which address specific topics and help nurses make safe and ethical decisions. CNO's consultation services support nurses and other stakeholders in understanding and applying the standards of practice. Together, the standards, guidelines, web resources and practice support services promote safe nursing practice.

CNO constantly monitors the environment to keep standards, guidelines and practice resources current. Over time CNO has revised, retired and introduced new standards in response to changes in legislation, nursing practice, the health system, best practice in regulation and public expectations. In 2019, CNO introduced the [Code of Conduct](#) for the nursing profession. Informed by evidence, the Code tells the public and other stakeholders the behaviour they can



expect from nurses. The Code changed how CNO communicated standards: it became an overarching standard of practice and CNO's other standards now complement the Code by providing greater detail in certain practice areas.

Despite many changes over the years, some standards remain dated and there has not been a review of all standards *and their relationship to each other*.¹ As CNO launches a new and aspirational strategic plan, it is time for a comprehensive review to modernize our standards, guidelines and practice resources to:

- reduce duplication
- address gaps
- promote a consistent “look and feel”, and
- ensure they provide an integrated framework to promote safe nursing practice.

Objectives and Approach

Objectives of this review is to ensure practice standards are:

- Accessible (for example, clear and easy-to-understand)
- Defensible (for example, evidence-informed, measurable)
- Relevant (for example, reflect contemporary practice, meet the needs of stakeholders)

Staff will build on work already completed to understand the public's expectations of nurses, including the extensive research that informed development of the Code. The approach will include:

- reviews of literature and other evidence (for example, CNO data)
- learning from other regulators' experience, and
- extensive stakeholder engagement to understand how nurses and others use the standards, what their needs are and how CNO can support understanding and implementation of standards.

Understanding stakeholder perspectives is critical to modernizing the standards and advancing the new strategic plan, which emphasizes CNO's role in influencing the system. CNO is planning rigorous engagement with a variety of audiences who have an interest in the outcome of this review, including:

- nurses
- the public
- employers
- academia
- other regulators
- nursing associations and unions, and
- CNO statutory committees.

¹ This type of analysis is particularly relevant since the Code of Conduct created a new relationship among the various standards.



While these stakeholders use CNO’s standards for different reasons and may have different needs, all share a common interest in patient safety.

Next Steps

In March, CNO will update Council with findings from the review of evidence and discussions with stakeholders to seek your input on next steps.

Questions / Considerations

Please reflect on the following questions in preparation for the Council discussion.

1. What would “modern standards” look like? What would they achieve?²
2. Think about how standards are used by nurses and members of the public (patients, caregivers). How can we improve their use of the standards?
3. What considerations would Council like staff to keep in mind as we initiate this work?

² A live polling feature will be incorporated into Council’s discussion for this first question.