



Guidance documents promote the understanding and application of current legislation, regulations, professional standards, and other documents that guide and direct members of the practical nursing profession in Manitoba.

Introduction

This document replaces a former practice guideline focused on nursing practice and conduct in the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic. While the COVID-19 Pandemic may no longer present the same level of public health emergency as it did during the early 2020s, the guidance in this document remains relevant to public health risks, such as:

- public health emergencies (which may or may not relate to an infectious disease)
- an infectious disease outbreak
- an epidemic, or
- a pandemic.

Risks to public health can place extraordinary stress on the health system and on health care providers. Nurses will be at the forefront of any response and members of the public will look to them for guidance. By virtue of being members of a regulated profession, nurses hold positions of trust and leadership. Actions and statements made by nurses, whether on duty or off duty, have the power to influence the public.

In reducing risks to public health, CLPNM registrants remain accountable to practice in a manner that upholds the Standards of Practice and Conduct, the Code of Ethics, and Practice Directions of their profession. The CLPNM also reminds registrants to review and follow any applicable Provincial Public Health Orders.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

To reduce risks to public health, practical nurses who are employed are expected to continue to follow the clinical practice guidelines, protocols and policies respecting PPE that have been adopted in their place of employment.

LPNs who are self-employed are encouraged to review and adopt Shared Health's [Routine Practices Protocol](#).

All practical nurses, whether employed or self-employed, must continue to apply their Standards of Practice and Conduct, as well as their Code of Ethics, when making decisions about the use of PPE.

This includes:

- Applying appropriate knowledge, skill and judgment in their practice when making decisions about the use of PPE. (Refer to CLPNM Standards 15, 17 and 22)
- Assessing risks and taking action to safeguard the health and well-being of clients, using an evidence-based framework. (Refer to CLPNM Standards 23 and 26)
- Respecting each client's choice and autonomy, as well as the client's right to access care by:

- not refusing to provide care to a client who chooses not to wear a mask, and
- respecting the wishes of a client who requests that the nurse wear a mask. (Refer to your Code of Ethics)

Vaccination for Healthcare Workers

Nurses have a duty to provide clients with safe, competent, and ethical care. This includes taking appropriate measures to protect clients from harm. Protecting clients from harm has always included taking steps to decrease the risk of infection.

Evidence supports that widespread vaccination shortens the duration of disease outbreaks, maintains public safety, reduces the burden on the health care system, and keeps health care providers safe to care for clients in need. ^{1 2 3 4}

Nurses have the professional responsibility to:

- adhere to policies and procedures of their employment setting
- take all reasonable steps to avoid doing harm
- recognize their own personal values and beliefs and take measures to avoid any negative impact on client care, nursing practice, and the practice environment.

The CLPNM recommends that all nurses, who provide direct client care, maintain current vaccination status (unless legitimate and rare medical reasons preclude vaccination) and encourages registrants to use current science-based sources and ethical frameworks as the foundation for their decision.

Providing Advice on Public Health Orders

Nurses are trusted health professionals. Views and statements made by nurses on important health issues that share or support misinformation can negatively impact the health and safety of the public. When clients ask a nurse for advice or opinion on Public Health Orders, they see the nurse as a trusted resource because of their professional designation. In keeping with this position of trust, the CLPNM expects nurses to provide clients with advice that:

- is within the practical nursing profession's legislated scope of practice
- uses known and accepted best practice and current scientific evidence
- provides accurate, unbiased, and timely information to facilitate informed decision-making

If providing guidance on immunization is not within an individual nurse's professional role/scope of employment, the nurse must direct the client to a legitimate trusted source for more information or assessment. The preferred source is the individual's primary care provider.

Professionalism

The CLPNM reminds all registrants that although they are free to hold their own opinions, nurses must reflect on their professional obligations (and workplace policies) before engaging in public forums.

Nurses are reminded that the standards for the profession do not allow nurses to publicly (whether in-person or virtually) express health care related views that are not supported by scientific evidence, including anti-mask and anti-vaccination opinions. Nurses may wish to encourage respectful discussion without contributing inaccurate, unreliable, or unproven

information that is harmful to the public's best interest.

Nurses are not entitled to use protected titles, in any form, to spread misinformation as members of a regulated profession. When a nurse communicates with the public and identifies as a nurse, implicitly or explicitly, they invoke their professional position as a nurse and are accountable to the CLPNM and the public it protects.

Nurses are required to:

- display the characteristics and attributes of a professional
- maintain at all times standards of personal conduct which reflect well on the profession and enhance public confidence
- adhere to licensed practical nurse legislation, regulations, by-laws, regulatory documents, while noting that Public Health Orders are part of the regulatory framework referred to here.

Summary

The CLPNM registrants, as members of a regulated profession, are required to support the mandate of the CLPNM to serve and protect the public interest.

The CLPNM's practice expectations are defined in the Standards of Practice and Conduct, Code of Ethics, Entry-Level Competencies, Nursing Competencies for LPNs in Manitoba, and CLPNM Practice Directions. Nurses found to be in violation of CLPNM standards may be subject to investigation and possible disciplinary procedures.

Nurses who have questions or concerns about their ability to maintain their standards are encouraged to contact the CLPNM and speak with a Practice Consultant.

The Practice Department can be contacted via email at practice@clpnm.ca or by phone at 204-663- 1212 or toll-free at 1-877-663-1212.

For More Information

Visit our website at www.clpnm.ca for more information and resources.

Contact us with questions at
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Phone: 204-663-1212
Toll Free: 1-877-633-1212
Email: info@clpnm.ca

About the CLPNM

The CLPNM is the governing body for the licensed practical nursing profession in Manitoba. Mandated to govern its members in a manner that serves and protects the public interest, the CLPNM establishes practice requirements for the provision of safe and effective nursing care.

Additional Resources

Social Media

CLPNM Social Media Practice Direction

Public Health Resources

Government of Canada - Coronavirus Disease
Government of Manitoba – Focus on the Fundamentals

Covid 19 Vaccine Resources

Government of Canada - COVID-19 Vaccines and Treatments Portal (for health professionals)
Government of Canada – COVID-19 Vaccines (for public)
Manitoba Health COVID-19 Vaccine

References

The following documents were consulted during the development of this guidance document.

CLPNM (2014). [Code of Ethics](#).

CLPNM (2021). [Standards of Practice and Conduct](#).

Shared Health (2024). [Routine Practices Protocol](#).

1. Bloom, D. E., Cadarette, D., & Ferranna, M. (2021). The Societal Value of Vaccination in the Age of COVID-19. *American Journal of Public Health*, 111(6), 1049-1054.
2. International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities and World Health Organization. (2022). Statement for healthcare professionals: How COVID-19 vaccines are regulated for safety and effectiveness
<https://www.who.int/news/item/11-06-2021-statement-for-healthcare-professionals-how-covid-19-vaccines-are-regulated-for-safety-and-effectiveness>
3. Thompson, et al. (2021). Effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in ambulatory and inpatient care settings. *New England Journal of Medicine*.
<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2110362>
4. Canadian Nurses Association (2021). COVID-19 Vaccinations.
<https://www.cna-aiic.ca/en/coronavirusdisease/covid-19-vaccinations>