

# PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

for Licensed Practical Nurses

Accountability

Competence

Service

Ethics

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# Introduction

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of British Columbia (CLPNBC) is one of 22 regulatory colleges governed by the [Health Professions Act](#). CLPNBC's mission is to regulate licensed practical nurses (LPNs) in the public interest. CLPNBC does this by setting standards, supporting LPNs to meet standards and acting if LPNs do not meet these standards.

Under the *Health Professions Act*, CLPNBC has the authority to establish, monitor and enforce standards of professional ethics and standards of practice to enhance the quality of LPN practice.

The professional standards clarify the minimum requirements for LPN practice in any setting or nursing domain (clinical practice, administration, education or research) and provide indicators that CLPNBC uses to measure LPN practice in British Columbia (BC).

LPNs meet these requirements in order to maintain ongoing registration with CLPNBC.

A **standard** is an expected behaviour against which actual behaviour can be compared.

**Indicators** are used to measure the actual performance of an individual nurse. The Indicators found in this document are not written in order of importance, nor are they intended to be an exhaustive list.

## Questions or Concerns?

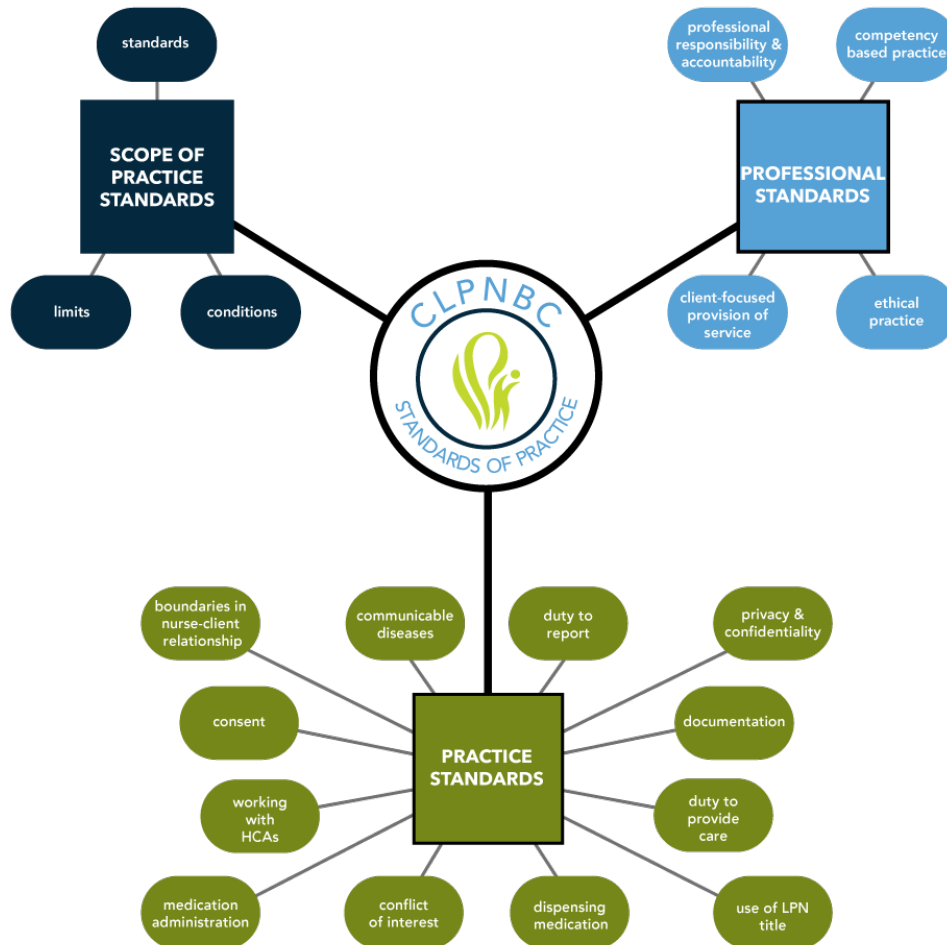
We can help! For further information about this document or any nursing practice issue, please contact CLPNBC's Nursing Practice Advisors by:

- Telephone: 778.373.3101 or 1.877.373.2201 (toll-free in BC)
- Email: [practice@clpnbc.org](mailto:practice@clpnbc.org)

# CLPNBC Standards of Practice Framework

The Professional Standards describe the requirements for LPN practice in BC and are part of the [CLPNBC Standards of Practice Framework](#).

Figure 1



**Professional standards** describe the behaviours that LPNs must demonstrate in their practice. These standards apply to LPNs in all areas of practice, for example clinical practice, education, administration and research.

**Practice standards** are a series of documents that set out requirements for practice and provide additional information about specific aspects of LPN practice, for example [Medication Administration](#).

**Scope of practice standards** describe the standards, limits and conditions related to nursing activities that LPNs are educated and authorized to perform in BC under the *Nurses (Licensed Practical) Regulation*.

# Assumptions

The following *assumptions* provide the foundation on which CLPNBC developed the professional standards:

- LPNs are self-regulating professionals who are accountable for providing safe, competent and ethical care within the legal and ethical framework of nursing regulation.
- LPNs work collaboratively with colleagues in the health care system to assess, plan, deliver and evaluate quality nursing services.
- LPN practice is client-centred and includes individuals, families, groups and communities.
- LPN professional standards are intentionally broad to support LPN practice in any setting and in all nursing domains.
- LPN professional standards allow for growth to meet changing approaches, treatments and technologies within the health care system.
- LPN professional standards encourage leadership, self-reflection and a commitment to providing safe, competent and ethical care.

This document sets out four professional standards for LPNs. They are:

1. Responsibility and Accountability
2. Competency-Based Practice
3. Client-Focused Provision of Service
4. Ethical Practice

# Using the Professional Standards

The professional standards guide and direct LPN practice. LPNs, CLPNBC, employers, educators and the public all use the professional standards to support safe, competent and ethical care.

**LPNs** use the professional standards to:

- Understand their professional practice obligations
- Support their continuing competence and professional development
- Explain LPN practice to others
- Resolve professional practice problems
- Advocate for changes to policies and practices

**CLPNBC** uses the professional standards to:

- Outline requirements for LPN practice
- Assist LPNs and employers to understand LPN practice
- Assess professional performance when complaints arise
- Address incompetent, impaired or unethical practice amongst LPNs

**Employers** use the professional standards to:

- Develop job descriptions
- Create orientation programs
- Provide performance feedback
- Develop work environments that support LPN practice

**Educators** use the professional standards to:

- Teach practical nursing students about safe, competent and ethical practice
- Support practical nursing students to understand their professional obligations once they become licensed
- Develop evaluation tools
- Provide performance feedback

**The public** uses the professional standards to:

- Understand the role of LPNs in providing health care

# Standard 1: Responsibility and Accountability

The licensed practical nurse maintains standards of nursing practice and professional conduct established by CLPNBC.

## Indicators

1. Maintains current registration
2. Maintains own competence to practise
3. Maintains own physical, psychological and emotional fitness to practise
4. Practises within own level of competence, employer policies, the LPN scope of practice and all relevant legislation
5. Is accountable and responsible for own nursing decisions, actions and professional conduct
6. Seeks guidance and direction as required
7. Takes action to promote safe, competent and ethical care for clients
8. Advocates for and/or helps to develop policies and procedures consistent with CLPNBC Standards of Practice
9. Understands the role of CLPNBC and its relationship to one's own practice

## Standard 2: Competency-Based Practice

The licensed practical nurse applies appropriate knowledge, skills, judgment and attitudes consistently in nursing practice.

### Indicators

1. Bases nursing practice on current evidence from nursing science, other sciences and the humanities
2. Knows how and where to access information to support and provide safe, competent and ethical nursing practice and care for clients
3. Uses critical thinking when collecting and interpreting data, planning, implementing and evaluating nursing care
4. Collects information on client status and care needs from a variety of sources using assessment skills and a review of pertinent clinical data
5. Identifies, analyzes and uses relevant decision support tools and data when making decisions about client status and care requirements
6. [Documents](#) client assessments, care needs, planned interventions and outcomes in a timely manner
7. Communicates client status to other members of the health care team as appropriate
8. Evaluates client responses to care and revises the plan of care as necessary
9. Responds and adapts to changes in the practice environment
10. Shares nursing knowledge with clients, colleagues, students and others
11. Communicates professionally in interactions with clients, colleagues, students and others



## Standard 3: Client-Focused Provision of Service

The licensed practical nurse provides nursing services and works with others in the best interest of clients.

### Indicators

1. Makes the client the primary focus when providing nursing care
2. Involves clients in identifying and prioritizing their own health goals and learning needs
3. Supports clients to learn about the health care system and to access appropriate health care services
4. Understands and communicates the contribution of nursing to the health of clients
5. Communicates, collaborates and consults with clients and other members of the health care team about client care
6. Coordinates and facilitates continuity of care services for the client
7. Supervises, leads and assigns appropriately to other members of the health care team
8. Supports and guides other members of the health care team to meet client care needs
9. Participates in and advocates for changes that improve client care and nursing practice
10. Recognizes and [reports](#) the incompetent or impaired practice or unethical conduct of another health professional to the appropriate person or body

## Standard 4: Ethical Practice

The licensed practical nurse understands, upholds and promotes the ethical standards of the nursing profession.

### Indicators

1. Demonstrates honesty and integrity at all times
2. Represents self clearly and accurately with respect to name, title and role
3. Respects and protects client worth, dignity, uniqueness and diversity
4. Protects client information and maintains [privacy and confidentiality](#)
5. Recognizes, respects and promotes the client's right to be informed and make informed choices
6. Begins, maintains and ends [nurse-client relationships](#) in a way that puts the client's needs first
7. Identifies the effect of own values, beliefs and experiences when [providing nursing care](#)
8. Identifies ethical issues, recognizes potential [conflicts](#); takes action to prevent or resolve them by communicating with the health care team and consulting with the appropriate people; and evaluates effectiveness of actions
9. Makes decisions about the allocation of resources under one's control based on the needs of the client
10. Recognizes and respects the contribution of others on the health care team
11. Treats colleagues, students and other health care workers in a respectful manner

# Glossary

**Accountability:** The obligation to answer for the professional, ethical and legal responsibilities of one's activities and actions.

**Advocate:** To speak or act on behalf of self or others with the intent of influencing or adding voice and enhancing autonomy.

**Advocacy:** The supporting, protecting and safeguarding of client rights and interests. Advocacy is undertaken in the best interest of the client, is an integral part of nursing and forms the foundation of trust inherent in the nurse-client relationship.

**Assignment:** Allocation of clients or client care activities among care providers in order to meet client care needs. Assignment occurs when the required care falls within the employing agency's policies and role descriptions and within the regulated health care provider's scope of practice. Assignment to unregulated care providers occurs when the required care falls within the employing agency's policies and role description.

**Attitude:** The feelings, beliefs, opinions and values predisposing a licensed practical nurse to behave in a certain way.

**Behaviour:** The way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially toward others.

**Client:** Refers to individuals (or their designated representative), families, groups and communities in receipt of nursing care. In some clinical settings, the client may be referred to as a patient or resident. In research, the client may be referred to as a participant.

**Client outcomes:** Health outcomes that can reasonably be expected based on the care and treatment provided.

**Client status:** A clear, concise statement of a judgment made by a licensed practical nurse based on a holistic assessment, including the client's perspective of his or her health and/or illness responses. Other terms may be used for client status such as nursing diagnosis, clinical judgment, signs and symptoms, patient problems, patterns of health or goals.

**Clinical data:** Decisions derived from reasoning processes based in clinical judgment and evidence.

**Collaboration:** A joint communication and decision-making process with the expressed goal of working together toward identified outcomes while respecting the unique qualities and abilities of each member of the group or team. Each member of the health care team contributes within the limits of his or her legislated scope of practice and range of competencies.

**Community:** Refers to persons who interact and have similar goals or interests, share common social supports and may or may not come from within the same geographic boundaries.

**Competence:** The integration and application of knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required for safe and appropriate performance in an individual's practice.

**Competencies:** The knowledge, skills, attitudes, critical thinking and clinical judgment required to perform safely, competently and ethically within an individual's nursing practice or in a designated role or setting. A number of variables influence an individual nurse's competencies, such as basic nursing education, experience and ongoing formal and informal learning.

**Competent care:** Care provided with a degree of knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment that could be reasonably expected of any qualified, prudent licensed practical nurse of the same standing in similar circumstances.

**Confidentiality:** Taking action to ensure, respect and preserve a person's privacy within ethical and legal protocols.

**Critical thinking:** A purposeful, disciplined and systematic process of continual questioning, logical reasoning and reflecting using interpretation, inference, analysis, synthesis and evaluation to achieve a desired outcome.

**Decision support tools:** Evidence-based documents used by licensed practical nurses to guide the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of client-specific problems.

**Determinants of health:** Factors that combine together to affect the health of individuals and communities. Determinants include social, economic and physical environment and a person's individual characteristics and behaviour.

**Diversity:** Encompasses acceptance and respect based on the understanding that each individual is unique. These differences include culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientations, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities and political beliefs or ideologies.

**Ethical:** The fundamental disposition of the licensed practical nurse toward what is good and right. Action toward what the licensed practical nurse recognizes or believes to be the best and most appropriate practice in a particular situation.

**Ethical decision-making:** A systematic process for making logical and consistent decisions to determine the most morally desirable course of action in the face of conflicting value choices.

**Evidence:** Data derived from various sources including research, national guidelines, policies, consensus statements, expert opinion and quality improvement.

**Family:** Two or more individuals who may or may not be related by blood, marriage or adoption.

**Fitness to practise:** All the qualities and capabilities of an individual relevant to his or her capacity to practise as a nurse, including, but not limited to, any cognitive, physical, psychological or emotional condition or a dependence on alcohol or drugs that impairs his or her ability to practise nursing.

**Health:** A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It includes physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, psychological and social health.

**Health assessment:** A process by which the licensed practical nurse obtains data on the client that includes a complete history of the client's health status, as well as a comprehensive physical, psychological, spiritual and sociocultural assessment. The licensed practical nurse is prepared to complete health assessments on neonates, children and adults.

**Health care team:** Clients, health care professionals, unregulated care providers, students and others who may be involved in providing care.

**Health promotion:** The process of enabling people to increase control over and improve their health based on an understanding of the determinants of health. Health promotion is particularly concerned with values and vision of a preferred future.

**Incompetent practice:** Practice that does not demonstrate the integration and application of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required for safe, competent and ethical practice.

**Indicator:** Illustration of how a standard is applied and met. Indicators provide specific criteria that are used, when applicable, to measure the actual performance of an individual nurse.

**Judgment:** The intellectual process exercised in forming a conclusion, decision and plan-of-action based upon a critical analysis of relevant evidence.

**Knowledge:** Broadly interpreted to extend beyond information, facts and “knowing about,” to include cognitive, experiential and intuitive sources of knowledge applied in nursing practice.

**Leadership:** The shared and independent responsibility to model the profession’s values, beliefs and attributes; and to promote and advocate for innovation and best practices. The attributes of leadership include self-awareness, commitment to individual growth, ethical values and beliefs, presence, reflection and foresight, advocacy, integrity, intellectual energy, being involved, being open to new ideas, having confidence in one’s own capabilities and being willing to make an effort to guide and motivate others. Leadership is not limited to formal leadership roles.

**Nurse:** A term used to refer to all four categories of regulated nursing professionals: licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, nurse practitioners and registered psychiatric nurses.

**Nursing science:** Knowledge (e.g., concepts, constructs, principles, theories) of nursing derived from systematic observation, study and research.

**Professional conduct:** Behaving in a manner that upholds the profession. It includes, but is not limited to, practising in accordance with CLPNBC standards, policies and bylaws and all legislation relevant to LPN practice.

**Quality improvement:** An organizational philosophy that seeks to meet clients’ needs and expectations by using a structured process that establishes indicators of quality, monitors performance against the indicators and utilizes findings to make improvements in all aspects of service.

**Responsibility:** The ability to respond and answer for one’s conduct and obligations, to have integrity and be trustworthy and reliable.

**Scope of practice:** The activities nurses are educated and authorized to perform as set out in the *Nurses (Licensed) Practical Regulation* under the *Health Professions Act* and complemented by standards, limits and conditions established by CLPNBC.

**Self-regulate:** Adhering to the registration requirements, standards of practice, ethics and continuing competence, while practising within applicable legislation, regulation and other laws governing nursing.

**Skills:** Actions or behaviours carried out with an adequate degree of proficiency or dexterity in the performance of activities. Skills can be psychomotor (involving body movement and dexterity), cognitive (involving critical interpretation and decision-making) or relational (involving communication and being with clients).

**Standard:** An expected behaviour against which actual behaviour can be compared.

**Unregulated care provider:** A healthcare provider who is not part of a regulated health profession, who provides care to clients under the guidance of a regulated health professional.

**Value:** A belief or attitude about the importance of a goal, object, principle or behaviour.

### More Information

Email [CLPNBC's Nursing Practice Advisors](#) or call 778 373 3101 or 1 877 373 2201

[CLPNBC Practice Standards](#)

[CLPNBC Professional Standards](#)

[CLPNBC Scope of Practice Standards](#)

[CLPNBC Bylaws](#)

### Other Resources

[\*British Columbia Health Care \(Consent\) and Care Facility \(Admissions\) Act\*](#)

[\*British Columbia Health Professions Act\*](#)

[\*British Columbia Privacy Act\*](#)

Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators' [\*Becoming a Licensed Practical Nurse in Canada: Requisite Skills and Abilities\*](#) (2013)

Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators' [\*Code of Ethics for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada\*](#)

Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators' [\*Entry-to-Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses\*](#)

Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators' [\*Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada\*](#)

[\*Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Examination Blueprint\*](#)

[\*Nurses \(Licensed Practical\) Regulation\*](#)

This document was adapted with permission from the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia's [\*Professional Standards for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners\*](#) (November 2012).

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Suite 260 – 3480 Gilmore Way  
Burnaby, B.C. V5G 4Y1  
Tel: 778.373.3101 or 1.877.373.2201 (within BC)

[www.clpnbc.org](http://www.clpnbc.org)