

Self-Employment and the Provision of Nursing Services During COVID-19

The purpose of this document is to provide self-employed RNs¹ with guidance on the provision of nursing services in the context of COVID-19. To reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, self-employed RNs are responsible to ensure the safety of their clients and staff and to ensure clients receive the care or services they are seeking.

RNs providing nursing services during COVID-19 are responsible and accountable to use the most current evidence provided by the Department of Health and Community Services by visiting <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>. RNs should also consider remaining connected with affiliated organizations and special interest groups to obtain the most up to date best practices.

RNs must comply with all legislative requirements including, but not limited to, the duty to report communicable diseases under the Public Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Public Health Protection and Promotion Regulations, and the collection, use, storage, and disposal of personal health information under the Personal Health Information Act². RNs must also adhere to the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.

RNs are accountable to provide clear and transparent communication regarding any change in practice via their method of public communication (e.g. website and/or with signage in an office/clinic setting).

RNs who are self-employed should review and consider the following:

- Self-employed RNs should carefully determine an appropriate screening process. The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner encourages RNs to consider the following in the context of screening for personal health information:
 - Is the collection of this information the minimum necessary for the purpose?
 - Does information need to be collected from the client as well as parents, guardians, caregivers, and/or other attendants?
 - How long must the information be maintained?
 - If collected via online survey, does the means of collecting and storing the information meet the necessary security standards?
 - Is a verbal checklist and documentation the client has passed the screen or not; sufficient for screening purposes?
 - If a client, during the COVID-19 screen, meets the criteria for potential infection (visit: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/covid-19-symptoms-treatment/>), the RN must redirect the client to 811 to receive the latest guidance from the Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health and ensure the client receives the care they need or are seeking.

¹ In this document, RN refers to both RNs and NPs.

² An independent contractor or self-employed individual may be the custodian of the patient record and therefore be required to meet custodian requirements in the Personal Health Information Act.



RNs are accountable to determine if in-person nursing services or the provision of nursing services via virtual health is appropriate.

In - Person Nursing Services

- Complete a point-of-care risk assessment which is based on the RN's professional judgment regarding the clinical situation, the use and availability of personal protective equipment (PPE), the client's home, or how a specific office/clinic/facility has designed and implemented physical and administrative controls.
- RNs must follow recommendations from the Department of Health and Community Services regarding appropriate infection control measures such as PPE, physical distancing, cleaning and disinfection.
- RNs who have direct contact with clients with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 must follow droplet and contact precautions. This includes wearing a surgical/procedure mask, eye protection, gloves, and gown.
- If providing services (e.g., footcare) in a facility owned and operated by another employer, contact the employer to gather knowledge surrounding their requirements in the management of COVID-19 in their facility.

Virtual Nursing Practice

- RNs must be competent in the application of virtual nursing practice.
- RNs must keep up to date on new processes, equipment, and/or changes.

For more information on your responsibilities related to virtual nursing practice, read CRNNL's Virtual Nursing Practice document available on our website.

For more information on your responsibilities related to self-employment, read CRNNL's self-employment document available on our website.