
MEMORANDUM

TO: NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR NURSE PRACTITIONER ASSOCIATION
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

FROM: COLLEGE OF REGISTERED NURSES of NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
(CRNNL)

SUBJECT: NURSE PRACTITIONERS (NPs) ENGAGING IN DISPENSING

DATE: 10/02/2020

The authority for registered nurses (RNs) to dispense drugs or medications is found in Section 3(2) of the *Pharmacy Act (2012)* which states that " This act shall not extend to or interfere with the dispensing of necessary drugs or medications by registered nurses in the course of duty when practicing with the approval and under the general supervision of a regional health authority". This message is reiterated in the CRNNL 2017 Dispensing document. This same document also has footnote that clarifies the NP scope of practice in relation to dispensing. It indicates that it is within the scope of practice of NPs to dispense medications and NPs are expected to adhere to the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board's (NLPB) Standards of Pharmacy Operation Community Pharmacy.

This memo is in response to a number of inquiries related to the dispensing of medications by NPs. NPs can dispense medications. NPs who dispense must follow the dispensing standards of practice required for pharmacists. Applicable current versions of NLPB Pharmacy Standards of Pharmacy Operations include, but are not limited to:

1. Methods of procurement;
2. Labeling of medication;
3. Maintaining records;
4. Supplying necessary patient information regarding the proper use of the medication;
5. Maintaining security for medication inventories;
6. Disposal of medication that are unfit to be dispensed; and
7. Patient education and counselling.

These standards recognize and address the potential for harm to patients from poor dispensing practices and are consistent with patient safety initiatives, and the need for medication information management standards. If NPs have questions regarding the NLPB's Standards of Pharmacy Operations, they are encouraged to contact the NLPB.

NPs who are engaging in or contemplating participating in the dispensing of medications should consider:

- It is within my scope of practice (am I educated and authorized) to dispense medication?
- Does my employer support dispensing as part of my practice setting?
- Do I have the necessary level of competence (necessary knowledge, skills, and judgement) to engage in the practice of dispensing?
- Am I able to meet the requirements outlined in the most current version of NLPB's Standards of the Pharmacy Operations?
- Do I have access to the provincial electronic health record through the Pharmacy Network?
- Do I have the necessary knowledge to educate and counsel patients regarding the safe and effective use of the patient's drug therapy?
- Am I able to meet the requirements of the *Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Monitoring Act* and *The Federal Food & Drug Regulations*?

NP/RN Role: Medication/Drug Samples:

Under Section 14(1) of the *Federal Food & Drug Act*, RNs and NPs are not authorized to distribute or cause to be distributed any drug sample to clients.

For those NPs who, in some circumstances are employed as an RN with dual employment or, for example, through reassignment, work as a registered nurse on a particular shift within a RHA, the NP is expected to apply the expectations outlined in CRNNL's most current version of the Dispensing document which only authorizes RNs to dispense within a RHA setting if supported by the employer.

NPs are encouraged to connect with CRNNL's Nursing Consultant: Policy & Practice- Michelle Carpenter at mcarpenter@crnnl.ca if they require information/clarification on the regulatory requirements for dispensing or any further assistance.