

This interpretive document describes information related to the **Scope of Practice**¹ and expectations for Registered Nurses (RNs) in Newfoundland and Labrador in relation to insulin dosage adjustment.

Within their scope of practice RNs participate in various aspects of counselling, teaching and information sharing with clients to assist clients to achieve optimal health outcomes. Individuals with diabetes must be supported in the skills of self-management (Canadian Diabetes Association, 2013). Counselling clients to adjust their insulin dosage in support of self-management is a **specialty competency**, therefore it requires additional theoretical and practical education beyond the entry level. RNs in Newfoundland and Labrador may carry out this competency when they are educated and authorized² to do so.

RNs counselling clients in self-management to adjust their prescribed insulin dosages must work within the parameters (e.g. dosage range, specified instructions) of a provided **prescription**. This role does not include, and is not considered, prescribing. Prescriptions for insulin must be provided by an authorized prescriber (e.g., Physician, NP).

RNs whose practice includes this specialty competency are required to obtain and maintain competence. It is the responsibility of the RN to assess his/her own competence to perform required nursing functions and make judgments about any limitations to their practice. **Competencies** to fulfil this role may be obtained through a formal education program such as the Canadian Diabetes Association Certified Diabetes Educator[®] certification.

The RN must follow best practices and employer related policies when counselling clients in their self-management, in areas such as: the use of evidence informed algorithms or pattern management; communication or collaboration with the attending physician or NP; recording and reporting outcomes of care; and, identifying practice settings where the role is applicable.

Glossary

Competencies: the integrated knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgment required to safely and effectively practice nursing.

Prescription: an instruction, directing that a drug be dispensed to or for a person or animal, given orally, in writing or by an electronic means approved by the board by a person authorized to do so by an Act of the province or by a prescriber referred to in section 26 of the NL Pharmacy Act.

Scope of Practice: the range of roles, functions, responsibilities, and activities which registered nurses are educated, competent and authorized to perform.

Specialty Competency: activities, both currently practiced and new and emerging interventions that require a higher level of complexity in application and/or critical thinking than entry level or basic competencies. The concepts underlying these competencies may have been introduced in a basic nursing education program but further learning and/or experience must be obtained through continuing education before these competencies can be implemented in clinical practice.

¹ Words defined in the glossary are bolded on first appearance in the document.

² For further information regarding the parameters of education and authorization, consult the *ARNNL (2006) Scope of Nursing Practice* Document.



References and Resources

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