



The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA) is mandated by government to regulate the profession of Practical Nurses in a manner that serves and protects the public.

Accordingly the College develops specific practice statements relevant to the Practical Nursing profession.

The purpose of a Practice Statement is:

- ❖ To provide LPNs, employers and the public with information and clarity regarding the scope of practice for LPNs.
- ❖ To help eliminate misconceptions regarding the scope of practice for LPNs.
- ❖ To assist employers with utilizing LPNs more effectively in the health care system.

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

PRACTICE STATEMENT 14

Approved by Council: October 29, 2009

This information is intended to assist members to make professional and ethical decisions during all phases of a pandemic. It outlines expectations from the College and links to numerous documents that provide education and support to the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN).

What is Pandemic?

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada a pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of a specific disease which affects a large proportion of the population (2009).

The World Health Organization states; an influenza pandemic may occur when a new influenza virus appears against which the human population has no immunity. With the increase in global transport, as well as urbanization and overcrowded conditions in some areas, epidemics due to a new influenza virus are likely to take hold around the world, and become a pandemic faster than before. Pandemics can be either mild or severe in the illness and death they cause, and the severity of a pandemic can change over the course of that pandemic (2009).

Duty to Care

The College's mission is to regulate and lead the profession in a manner that protects and serves the public through excellence in Practical Nursing.

During a pandemic, there will be many ethical considerations for all health professionals.

The College expects LPNs to fulfill their commitment to clients, the profession, and the public during a pandemic by providing safe, compassionate, and ethical care.

Members ethical obligations are addressed in the following documents:

- CLPNA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (2008)
- CLPNA HPA Licensed Practical Nurse Regulation (2003)
- CLPNA Abandonment of Care Practice Statement 13 (2008)

Responsibilities & Resources

LPNs are expected to understand a pandemic and their role within a developing pandemic. The College maintains current learning tools, references, and links to pandemic updates at www.clpna.com.

Alberta Health and Wellness has updated **Alberta's Plan for Pandemic Influenza – A Summary (Oct. 2009)**. This document acknowledges the potential that pandemic influenza may stress the health care system. It is clear that even if only 15% - 35% of the population display symptoms of influenza, the burden will be heavy for the current system to manage.



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Health care workers and families may be affected causing absenteeism in schools and the workplace. Demands for services in some settings may increase dramatically adding additional pressure. Health care workers (professional and unregulated) may be trained to provide aspects of care different from current roles and in non-traditional roles. It is possible that during a pandemic LPNs and other health care workers may be asked to perform unfamiliar job tasks. Although flexibility may be necessary to address the health needs of the public, it is important that LPNs work within their scope of practice in any environment they are placed in.

Employers share in the responsibility to prepare the workplace for a pandemic in a safe and ethical manner respecting both the public need and professional risk. The Government of Alberta has developed a **Best Practice Guideline for Workplace Health & Safety During Pandemic Influenza (2009)**. This document outlines workplace legislated requirements, best practices, strategies, and employment standards in the event of pandemic influenza. High exposure job tasks and best practices for respiratory protective equipment have been defined. During a pandemic health care workers may be expected to care for patients under hazardous circumstances.

College Support During a Pandemic

The College recognizes the importance of pre-planning, ongoing planning and collaboration amongst health professions as part of managing crisis situations. Internal and external essential operational service plans are in place at the College that will be implemented during an emergency event in Alberta.

In the event of a severe pandemic outbreak the College will maintain necessary services to support membership and the health system in a manner that protects and serves the public.

Practice consultation will remain a priority and be available from the College by phone or email to assist and guide LPNs during a pandemic.



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REFERENCES

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