PRACTICE POLICY

The legislative mandate of the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA) is to serve and protect the public by ensuring its members deliver safe, competent and ethical nursing care. Practice policies outline expectations of behaviour that are established, monitored and enforced by the CLPNA. Practice policies may link with Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, legislation, regulation or by-laws relevant to nursing practice. They can also link to supportive documents that help members meet these policy expectations.

This document is linked to legislation:

| Health Professions Act | Licensed Practical Nurses Profession Regulation | Immunization Regulation |

This document is linked to other documents that direct expectations of professional behavior and requirements for practice:

| Standards of Practice | Standards of Practice and Competencies for Perioperative Licensed Practical Nurses | Authorized Restricted Activities for Licensed Practical Nurses |

INTRODUCTION Practical nursing is a regulated profession in Alberta. Individuals are eligible for registration as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) through the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA) if they have met all of the requirements for registration listed in the Licensed Practical Nurses Profession Regulation (LPN Regulation). This includes educational requirements of the profession. The LPN Regulation also identifies certain areas of practical nursing as “specialized practice”. There are additional requirements expected of an LPN if they wish to practice in one of these specialized practice areas.

PURPOSE The purpose of this practice policy is to indicate the additional educational requirements for specialized practice areas. The practice policy also outlines other conditions required of an LPN to practice in a specialized practice area.

POLICY There are five recognized specialized practice areas: immunization, advanced foot care, perioperative, dialysis, and advanced orthopedic nursing. LPNs wishing to practice in one of these areas must complete additional specialized practice education or advanced training. The breadth and/or depth of the competencies required to practice in these specialized practice areas are not taught in the base practical nursing education programs.

In accordance with the LPN Regulation, specialized practice education or advanced training programs are approved by the Council to ensure that the programs meet the competencies required of LPNs in a specialized practice area. The CLPNA Educational Standards Advisory Committee (ESAC) continually works with practical nursing education providers to review and reassess both basic and advanced training programs.

An LPN who completes a Council-approved advanced education or training program in a specialized practice area can apply to the Registrar for authorization to practice in this area. This authorization will be indicated on the member’s practice permit.

Specialized practice areas for LPNs encompass the provision of authorized specialized restricted activities. These specialized restricted activities have additional expectations that an LPN needs to follow if they are practicing in a specialized practice area.

Immunization

LPNs with the authorization to practice in the Immunization Specialty may work in any setting administering vaccines to clients 5 years of age or older with employer protocols in place. There is a minimum requirement for indirect remote supervision. The
authorized practitioner providing the supervision must be available for consultation and guidance.

**Advanced Foot Care**
LPNs with the authorization to practice in the **Advanced Foot Care Specialty** may independently remove a body tissue, administer anything by invasive procedure on body tissue or perform surgical or other invasive procedures on body tissue below the dermis for the purposes of removing a corn or callus as part of the provision of foot care.\(^4\)

**Perioperative**
LPNs with the authorization to practice in the **Perioperative Specialty** may administer anything or perform invasive procedures on body tissue below the dermis under the **direct supervision** of an authorized practitioner who is performing surgery.\(^5\) This means that the authorized practitioner providing the supervision must be physically present at the point of care during the surgical procedure.

LPNs with this specialization are also held to the standards and required competencies outlined in the “**Standards of Practice and Competencies for Perioperative Licensed Practical Nurses**”.

**Dialysis**
LPNs with the authorization to practice in the **Dialysis Specialty** may **independently** insert or remove instruments, devices, fingers or hands into an artificial opening into the body for the purposes of performing dialysis.\(^6\)

Please note this authorization refers to the nursing interventions performed as part of a hemodialysis treatment.

**Advanced Orthopedic**
LPNs with the authorization to practice in the **Advanced Orthopedic Specialty** and a verbal or written order may perform the setting or resetting of a fracture of a bone for the purposes of inserting and removing orthopedic devices and applying casts.\(^7\) There is a minimum requirement for **indirect supervision**. This means the authorized practitioner must be readily available on site for consultation and guidance. The authorized practitioner who provided the verbal or written direction must be the one providing the supervision.

**Note:** For any of the above specializations, please see CLPNA’s document on “**Authorized Restricted Activities for Licensed Practical Nurses**” for additional information.

**CONCLUSION** Specialized practice areas involve advanced competencies due to the nature of the interventions and the performance of specialized restricted activities as part of the role. LPNs wishing to practice in one of these areas must first complete specialized education or training in that area and be authorized by the CLPNA. Depending on the specialty, there may be additional conditions required as each specialty includes the provision of restricted activities that go beyond those authorized for all LPNs. Adherence to the requirements and conditions outlined in this policy is an expectation of the CLPNA. If there any questions about specialized practice areas, please contact the Practice Department at the CLPNA via practice@clpna.com, 780-484-8886 or 1-800-661-5877 (toll free in Alberta).
REFERENCES

1 Licensed Practical Nurses Profession Regulation, Alta Reg 81/2003, s 4(b) and s 4(c).
2 LPN Regulation, s 4(b) and s 13(4).
3 LPN Regulation, s 13(4)(a) and s 13(4)(b).
4 LPN Regulation, s 13(5)(a).
5 LPN Regulation, s 13(5)(b).
6 LPN Regulation, s 15(2).
7 LPN Regulation, s 16.

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