

Data & Research

INTRODUCTION

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA) facilitates research projects about the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) profession and practice. The CLPNA assesses research projects for alignment with the organization's mandate, mission, and strategic priorities.

In 2020, Bill 46, the *Health Statutes Amendment Act*, introduced the future regulation of Health Care Aides (HCAs). When the amendment is proclaimed, HCAs will be regulated as a distinct profession by the CLPNA. As the CLPNA is currently the administrator of the HCA Directory, (a central database of HCAs who have achieved core competencies), the CLPNA may facilitate research activities aimed at informing the regulation of HCAs.

The CLPNA has the authority under the *Health Professions Act (HPA)* to carry out its activities in a manner that protects and serves the public interest. The CLPNA is committed to safeguarding the personal data entrusted to us by registrants and the HCAs enrolled in the HCA Directory. The CLPNA manages personal information in accordance with the *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)* and other applicable laws.

PURPOSE

Research is broadly defined as the collection of data to draw conclusions about a topic, typically done so through a research study. For this policy, researchers include anyone who is pursuing a research study.

This policy does not extend to situations where non-identifying data may be shared with stakeholders and external organizations for required reporting purposes (such as the Canadian Institute for Health Information or the Government of Alberta) and general public inquiries for aggregate information that is readily available (for example, the number of active registrants).

The purpose of this policy is to clarify when and how the CLPNA may allow researchers to access and use the data administered by the CLPNA for the purposes of a research study. It also facilitates the collection of data directly from registrants/HCAs for research purposes.

Data administered by the CLPNA includes information collected through a registrant's annual renewal of their practice permit, a non-registrant's application information, departmental activities (e.g., conduct processes), CLPNA-led research activities, and engagement efforts such as focus groups. These data include, but are not limited to, demographic information, employment setting and status, and years of practice.

At no time will identifying personal information of registrants and HCAs be shared with researchers. Any data shared will be non-identifying.

POLICY

For the purposes of a research study, researchers who want to access and use data administered by the CLPNA or collect registrant/HCA data directly must submit a request to the Director of Performance Measurement and Research (PMR) or designate.

The PMR Director or designate evaluates the initial request (see process below) and may ask for additional information before making a final decision. Decisions are made at the discretion of the PMR Director or designate.

Process

All requests are evaluated using the CLPNA's research criteria. The research must align with the CLPNA's regulatory mandate and *at least one* of the following regulatory functions:

1. standards and guidance
2. education and training
3. registration
4. fitness to practice

Refer to the CLPNA research criteria (Appendix A) for further information.

All requests are assessed to understand the nature, degree of risk, and associated benefits of the proposed research. Identified risks, if any, should be deemed reasonable in relation to the importance of the knowledge to be gained and other anticipated benefits (e.g., evidence that contributes to better and safer care for the public).

Requests for data access, use, and collection by researchers fall into the following categories: non-partnered, partnered, and other.

Non-partnered Research

Non-partnered research means the CLPNA has no direct involvement in the research activities and projects.

The CLPNA's limited role typically entails bringing awareness of the research to registrants and/or HCAs through various CLPNA communication channels (e.g., social media, newsletter, etc.).

The researcher is typically asked to provide a brief overview of the research project for review by the PMR Director or designate. The overview should include, but is not limited to, aim, objectives, methodology, and ethics approval. For non-partnered requests that meet the CLPNA research criteria, researchers are typically asked to provide a short description and a study link that will be used in CLPNA communications to notify registrants/HCAs. Registrants/HCAs may then directly contact the non-partnered researcher directly if they are interested in participating.

The CLPNA does not directly collect data from registrants or HCAs on behalf of non-partnered researchers (such as a survey) and does *not* provide any registrant and/or HCA data to the researcher.

Partnered Research

Partnered research means the CLPNA takes a more engaged role through in-kind and/or monetary support of the research activities and projects. The CLPNA may assume different roles in partnered research including, but not limited to, funder, co-investigator, or advisor (subject matter expert). See Appendix B for definitions of the various roles.

The researcher will be required to submit a research proposal and, if approved, sign a research agreement. For approved projects, the CLPNA may facilitate access to registrants and/or HCAs through various CLPNA communication channels so that researchers can collect information directly from these groups. The researcher may be given access to non-identifying registrant and/or HCA information (such as demographic data) relevant to their research.

Other Requests

CLPNA staff who are enrolled in an education program may request access to, use of, and/or collection of registrant/HCA data. Staff requests will be evaluated against the CLPNA research criteria described above. For requests that meet the criteria, a Memorandum of Understanding must be signed outlining for what purposes the staff member may access, use, and/or collect registrant/HCA information. The CLPNA will not provide individually identifying data to a staff member in relation to their education program request.

Conclusion

This policy outlines when, for research purposes, the CLPNA may provide researchers access to, and use of, data administered by the CLPNA and facilitate collection of registrant/HCA data for research purposes.

Documents are updated frequently. For the most current version and access to related documents and resources, please visit the Knowledge Hub on clpna.com. If after reading this document you have any questions about the use of research funding and registrant data, please contact the Department of Performance Measurement and Research via email at info@clpna.com, or by phone at 780-484-8886 or 1-800-661-5877 (toll free in Alberta).

Appendix A: CLPNA Research Criteria

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA) is committed to pursuing research that is related to its mandate of protecting the public. The CLPNA funds high quality research about the practical nurse profession and practice.

For the CLPNA to support and/or fund any research pursuits, it must be aligned with and examine a topic related to, least one of the four core functions¹ that CLPNA serves as a regulatory body.

Mandatory Criteria	
There must be evidence that the study objectives will advance knowledge and produce new discoveries related to the core functions of a regulatory body & the CLPNA's legislated mandate. At least ONE of the core functions must be met.	
Core Function	What We Are Looking For
Standards & Guidance Establishment, maintenance, and enforcement of practice, conduct, and ethical standards for registrants	Do the objectives relate back to the development and enforcement of practice, conduct, and ethical standards? Relevant topics may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review or examination of a standard(s) of practice and • understanding how care practices are developed, understood, maintained, enforced in the care setting (the experiences of registrant practice).
Education & Training Education, training, and continuing competence requirements for registrants including development and approval of programs of study and courses	Do the objectives relate back to education practices and processes, training, and continuing competence requirements? Relevant topics may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • efficacy of education and training to prepare registrants for competent, safe practice and • experiences of registrants (in education, training, and work environments) and impact on practice.
Registration Registration and renewal requirements and process for registrants	Do the objectives relate back to registration processes and renewal requirements? Relevant topics may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • efficacy, efficiency, and accuracy of registration process and • experiences of registrants (in registration process) and impact on practice.

¹ The core functions are based on the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), an organization in the United Kingdom that oversees health and care regulators. The PSA is used internationally as a guide for regulatory practice and regulator excellence.

<p>Fitness to Practice</p> <p>Requirements and process to protect the public (including the process to review and investigate complaints)</p>	<p>Do the objectives relate back to conduct and disciplinary matters?</p> <p>Relevant topics may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • influences on maintaining fitness to practice and • experiences of registrants (in conduct/disciplinary process and/or work environment) and impacts on practice and providing safe care.
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NOTE: In addition to the mandatory criteria, the CLPNA will assess alignment with its strategic priorities. While this alignment is not mandatory, there should be alignment with CLPNA’s strategic priorities and mission if possible.

Appendix B: Potential CLPNA Staff Research Roles

In research projects, CLPNA staff may serve in a variety of roles, including those defined below.

Advisor

The CLPNA will serve as a subject matter expert to the research, providing guidance on accomplishing research objectives. This may include advising on development of the research question(s) and methods. Typically, this role is in relation to a research project conducted by a postsecondary student. CLPNA staff will be required to devote time to support the researcher regularly.

Co-Investigator

The CLPNA will significantly contribute to the preparation of the research proposal and execution of the study activities with the Principal Investigator(s). CLPNA staff will be required to devote time to the project regularly.

Collaborator

The CLPNA may provide feedback at different stages of the project and engage in activities related to the research. The CLPNA may distribute study information to registrants through its communication channels and provide connections to the researcher to other key stakeholders.

Funder

The CLPNA provides monetary support for a research project external to the College. The CLPNA may advise to ensure alignment with the College's research criteria; however, development and execution of the research are the primary responsibilities of the Principal Investigator(s).

Other

The CLPNA may serve in another capacity with a research project that is not captured in any of the indicated roles. The CLPNA's role and involvement will be determined in discussions with the researcher.