



Standards of Practice for Health Care Aides of Alberta

Effective Date: **DATE**
College of LPNs and HCAs of Alberta



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INTRODUCTION

The Standards of Practice for Health Care Aides (HCAs) of Alberta is an authoritative document of the minimum standards of behaviour expected of registrants of the profession. Together with the *Code of Ethics for Health Care Aides of Alberta*, these documents outline requirements for professional HCA practice.

The four standards are applicable to HCAs in all settings. Indicators accompanying each standard describe more specifically the expectations for HCA practice. Neither the standards nor the indicators are in order of priority.

HCAs practice **self-regulation** and are personally responsible for meeting the standards of practice of the HCA profession. Self-regulation refers to an individual's **responsibility** and **accountability** for their own decisions, actions, and professional conduct. Responsibility for setting, monitoring, and enforcing the standards of practice lies with the College of Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides of Alberta (CLHA).

Employer requirements (such as workplace policies) do not replace or dismiss the standards of practice set by the CLHA that are described in this document.

If the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) or another piece of **legislation** conflicts with the Standards of Practice, the requirements of the legislation apply; if the Standards of Practice conflict with an employer's policies or practices, the Standards of Practice apply.

Standards of Practice

1. Professional Responsibility and Accountability
2. Knowledge and Practice
3. Self-Regulation and Public Safety
4. Professional and Ethical Practice

Principles

1. HCAs are responsible and accountable for providing safe, competent, and ethical care while working collaboratively with others.
2. HCA practice is person-centred and holistic and may include individuals, families, and caregivers.
3. HCA practice standards provide the structure to support HCAs in meeting the healthcare needs of Albertans.
4. HCAs must maintain and improve individual **competence** and safe ethical practice.

Terms found in the glossary are **bolded** where they appear for the first time in this document.

STANDARD 1: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

HCAs are responsible and accountable for their individual practice, professional conduct, and meeting regulatory requirements.

Performance Expectations

HCAs must:

- 1.1. Practice within applicable legislation, regulation, standards of practice, code of ethics, bylaws, and employer requirements.
- 1.2. Demonstrate ongoing professional development through compliance with legislated continuing competence requirements.
- 1.3. Practice to their individual level of competence within the defined HCA role in their practice setting.
- 1.4. Respond as needed and contribute to the efforts of the healthcare team during emergencies.
- 1.5. Report any circumstances that could be considered unprofessional, unethical, or unlawful.
- 1.6. Be accountable and responsible for their own professional conduct and ethical decision-making when collaborating with others.
- 1.7. Report and document according to applicable legislation, regulations, and bylaws along with regulator and employer requirements.
- 1.8. Be accountable for communicating with the regulatory college, as required.
- 1.9. Provide guidance to support and/or participate in mentorship.
- 1.10. Only access health and personal information relevant to providing professional services for a client.
- 1.11. Use and disclose health and personal information as specified by privacy legislation.

STANDARD 2: PRACTICE AND COMMUNICATION

HCAAs demonstrate effective communication in their practice while delivering person-centred care.

Performance Expectations

HCAAs must:

- 2.1. Carry out a client's plan of care within the defined HCA role in collaboration with the healthcare team.
- 2.2. Provide relevant, timely, and accurate information to clients, families, caregivers, and the healthcare team.
- 2.3. Report and document any changes in client health status to the healthcare team.
- 2.4. Demonstrate effective, respectful, and collaborative interpersonal communication.
- 2.5. Promote and contribute to positive health outcomes for clients within a culture of safe practice.

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STANDARD 3: SELF-REGULATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

HCAAs maintain individual competence, fitness to practice, and self-regulation in order to protect the public.

Performance Expectations

HCAAs must:

- 3.1. Demonstrate an understanding of and accept responsibility for self-regulation by following the standards of practice, code of ethics, and other regulatory requirements.
- 3.2. Establish and maintain professional registration with the CLHA.
- 3.3. Maintain fitness to practice in order to provide safe, competent, and ethical care.
- 3.4. Disclose and report any failure to maintain fitness to practice.
- 3.5. Demonstrate an understanding of the HCA role and how it contributes to client and public safety.
- 3.6. Anticipate, identify, and reflect on established client safety principles to promote safe, competent, and ethical care.

STANDARD 4: PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

HCAAs maintain professional boundaries and adhere to their Code of Ethics.

Performance Expectations

HCAAs must:

- 4.1 Identify and minimize the impact personal values, beliefs, and biases have on collaborative practice and client care.
- 4.2 Practice in a culturally safe manner respectful of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 4.3 Establish, maintain, and end a professional therapeutic relationship with clients and families as appropriate.
- 4.4 Maintain professional boundaries with clients and colleagues.
- 4.5 Respect and protect clients' rights to autonomy, confidentiality, dignity, privacy, respect, and access to care.
- 4.6 Engage in conduct that upholds the integrity of the profession.

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DEFINITIONS

This glossary explains some of the terms used in the Standards of Practice for Health Care Aides of Alberta.

Accountability: The obligation to answer for the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities of one's activities and actions.

Autonomy: "The ability to make choices and decisions, including with support if necessary, according to one's conscience, values, will and preferences."

Client/patient: An individual or group of individuals who require personal care and support services from HCAs. In some clinical settings, the client may be referred to as a patient or a resident. Where this term is used, it should be taken to mean anyone receiving care, including family members.

Colleague: This includes those whom one works with usually in a profession or business, such as a fellow worker or member of a staff, department, profession.

Competence: "The ability to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, behaviours, judgments, and personal attributes required to practise safely and ethically in a designated role and setting. Personal attributes include, but are not limited to, attitudes, values, and beliefs."

Disclose: To make personal health information available or to release it to another person.

Fitness to practice: Refers to having the physical, mental, and emotional health to provide safe, competent, and ethical care.

Integrity of the profession: A commitment to the profession that builds trust by working within the profession's standards of practice and code of ethics.

Legislation: Any legally binding rules including the *Health Professions Act* or other statutes, regulations, bylaws, standards of practice, and code of ethics that govern the HCA profession in Alberta.

Person-centred care: A principle of health care delivery that involves advocacy, empowerment, and respecting the persons' autonomy, voice, values, self-determination, and participation in decision making. Additionally, person-centred care includes physical, psychological, social, emotional, cognitive, cultural, and spiritual support.

Plan of care/Care plan: A plan of care that is developed according to and carried out after careful assessment of (i) client needs, (ii) individual staff competence, and (iii) environmental supports.

Professional boundaries: The separation between a client and the HCA as a healthcare provider that establishes and maintains a safe relationship for both the client and HCA.

Responsibility: The ability to respond and answer for one's actions and obligations; to be trustworthy, reliable, and dependable.

Self-regulation: An individual's responsibility and accountability for their own decisions, actions, and professional conduct.

Therapeutic relationship: A trusting relationship between a client and an HCA that respects and maintains professional boundaries and contributes to health-related treatment goals for a defined period of time.

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