



POSITION STATEMENT ÉNONCÉ

Nurses Association of New Brunswick • L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers du Nouveau-Brunswick

SELF-EMPLOYED NURSES

The health care system is dynamic and as a result, the changing landscape has prompted a number of registered nurses to consider independent nursing practice as a viable career option. The Nurses Association of New Brunswick believes that self-employed nurses provide a service that addresses the unmet health care needs of the consumer.

Definition

The self-employed nurse is in independent practice and provides professional nursing services directly to clients in a variety of practice settings in the areas of direct care, education, research, administration or consultation. Clients may be individuals, families, groups, corporations, educational institutions, communities or other health care agencies.

Nurses in independent practice may provide nursing services themselves, in partnership with other practitioners, or employ others to do so.

Responsibilities of the Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB)

The objective of the NANB, with respect to independent nursing practice, is to support nurses in achieving high standards of professional practice and to protect the public. In keeping with this objective, the NANB has taken the initiative to develop this statement outlining the Association's position on independent nursing practice as well as a document entitled *Minding Your Business: A Guide for Establishing an Independent Nursing Practice* (2002b). It is hoped that these documents, in addition to other NANB documents, such as the *Nurses Act* (1984), NANB's *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses* (2005a), and the CNA's *Code of Ethics* (June 2008a), will assist nurses in determining the scope and nature of self-employed practice in nursing.

Responsibilities of the self-employed nurse

Nurses in independent practice define and are responsible for the services they deliver and for the nature of the nurse/client relationship (NANB, 2002). The self-employed nurse is directly accountable to the client to whom, or on behalf of whom, nursing services are provided and any third party with whom the registered nurse may have contracted for payment of nursing services. In addition, the self-employed nurse is accountable to appropriate peers and colleagues, and to the professional nurses' association.

The nurse in independent practice must have current practicing membership with the NANB and have considerable current experience, education, knowledge, skills, and a referral network in the chosen field of practice to provide independent nursing care safely and competently.

The nurse becomes qualified for independent practice through appropriate basic and post-basic nursing education and skill development, and extensive nursing experience appropriate to the level and scope of the chosen field of nursing practice. Self-employed nurses must maintain their competency to practice through participation in continuing education/professional development and should utilize a process to systematically evaluate their practice. The self-employed nurse must also fulfill the requirements for the Continuing Competence Program which requires registered nurses to reflect on their nursing practice through self-assessment, to develop and implement a learning plan, and to evaluate the impact of the learning activities. It is an approach through which each registered nurse reflects in a formalized manner on their practice at least once annually (NANB, 2007).

The services offered by the nurse in independent practice must fall within the boundaries established by legislative, regulatory, professional practice, ethical, and business standards and are linked to the nurse's professional knowledge, skills, and expertise. Nurses proposing to offer independent nursing services should seek an evaluation for *Assessment of Nursing Practice* at NANB. This evaluation will assist the self-employed nurse to know if practice hours count for registration renewal, and for liability coverage through the Canadian Nurses Protective Society (CNPS) (NANB, 2005b). If an assessment of nursing practice has not been done prior to starting the independent practice, the hours of work may not be recognized towards registration, and the use of the title "RN" may not be used legitimately, until such time as the assessment has been done. This assessment is required, in order to determine if the work performed falls within the scope of nursing practice and if it meets the NANB standards of nursing practice.

March 1982
Revised May 1996
Revised July 2002
Revised February 2008

References

Canadian Nurses Association (June 2008). *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*. Ottawa: Author.

http://www.cna-aiic.ca/cna/documents/pdf/publications/CodeofEthics2002_e.pdf

Nurses Association of New Brunswick (1984). *Nurses Act*. Fredericton: Author.

http://www.nanb.nb.ca/pdf_e/Publications/General_Publications/NursesAct_E&F.pdf

Nurses Association of New Brunswick (2008). *Minding your business: A guide for establishing an independent nursing practice*. Fredericton: Author.

http://www.nanb.nb.ca/pdf_e/Publications/General_Publications/MindingYourBusinessE.pdf

Nurses Association of New Brunswick **(2005a)**. *By-laws*. Fredericton: Author.
http://www.nanb.nb.ca/pdf_e/Publications/General_Publications/BylawsJune2005E.pdf

Nurses Association of New Brunswick **(2005b)**. *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses*. Fredericton: Author.
http://www.nanb.nb.ca/pdf_e/Publications/General_Publications/StandardsofRegisteredNursesE.pdf

Nurses Association of New Brunswick **(2007)**. *Continuing Competency Program-Learning in Action*. Fredericton: Author.
[http://www.nanb.nb.ca/pdf_e/CCP/CCP%20-%20May%202007%20-%20English%20\(FULL\).pdf](http://www.nanb.nb.ca/pdf_e/CCP/CCP%20-%20May%202007%20-%20English%20(FULL).pdf)