

YOU'VE ASKED

We (RNs) have been asked to do a procedure on our unit that we were not doing before. Our manager referred to this procedure as a post entry-level procedure. What are post entry-level procedures?

Post Entry-Level Procedures

Registered nurses (RNs) in New Brunswick are educated as generalists. Through a combination of formal education, experiential learning and mentoring, they have acquired the nursing knowledge, skill and judgement expected of entry-level registered nurses. However, because of ongoing advances in research and technology, and changes in health care delivery systems, the practice of RNs needs to evolve to respond to clients' care needs. Therefore, the dynamic nature of nursing practice requires that RNs provide care and acquire knowledge and skills at a level beyond the entry level and practise using evidence-informed knowledge, skill and judgement.

Post entry-level procedures (PELPs) are those nursing procedures that are not part of basic nursing education, are not currently part of RNs work expectations and are being introduced into nursing practice, in specific practice settings. Employers and different work settings often refer to these post entry-level procedures as advanced nursing tasks, added competencies, contextual competencies, delegated medical functions and specialized skills.

Post entry-level procedures should not be confused with delegated tasks. PELPs, once acquired and maintained, become part of the individual RN's scope of practice, for which he/she is responsible and accountable. In specific situations and in order to meet client care needs, other health professionals may delegate a task to an RN. Delegated tasks are those tasks that are normally performed by other health professionals. A delegated

task is always client and time specific (one client and one time only) and cannot be applied to other clients. The delegated task does NOT become part of the scope of practice of RNs. The health professional who delegates a task remains responsible for the delegation and the outcome of the task.

The clients' best interest is the primary consideration in deciding if a new post-entry level procedure should be introduced into nursing practice.

A Two-Step Process

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The safe execution of a PELP encompasses the determination of when to perform the procedure, the planning and implementation of care and the evaluation and management of the outcomes of the procedure. When considering a request to introduce a post entry-level procedure into the practice of RNs, consideration must be given to the necessity for RNs to acquire not only the skill in performing the procedure but also the need to attain

competence. Competence involves the knowledge, skill and judgement to ensure safe, competent and ethical care. RNs must recognize and practise within their own level of competence and seek additional knowledge and assistance when needed.

The decision to add a post entry-level procedure into nursing practice is made in collaboration with the RN and the employer. However, the employer is ultimately responsible for making the decision to accept the request, for setting policies and for creating a practice environment that supports the RN's acquisition of additional knowledge and skills for the safe and competent delivery of PELPs. Self-employed RNs wishing to add new PELPs into their practice must contact NANB for a practice assessment.

In order to support RNs and employers in determining if a PELP should be added to RNs' scope of practice, the Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB) recently revised a document that offers a two (2) step decision-making process that considers different requirements such as the appropriateness of the PELP, the required acquisition and maintenance of competence and the role of the employer. This process is available in the document titled: *Examining Requests for Post Entry-Level Procedures (2013)* and can be found under the Publications and Resources section of NANB's website: www.nanb.nb.ca/index.php/publications/practice.

Registered nurses are responsible to practise safely, competently and ethically. This requires that RNs

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recognize and practise within their own level of competence and seek additional knowledge and assistance as required. The determination of the most appropriate health care worker to provide a specific service or to perform a certain activity will depend greatly on the context of practice; therefore, when examining requests for post entry-level procedures, a decision-making process which is client-centered and employer or setting-specific must be used.

For more information on post entry-level nursing procedures, call NANB to speak with a Practice Consultant at 1-800-442-4417 or by email at nanb@nanb.nb.ca.

REFERENCES

Nurses Association of New Brunswick (2013). *Examining Requests for Post Entry-Level Procedures*. Fredericton: author.

Nurses Association of New Brunswick (2012). *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses*. Fredericton: author.

What if I cannot find a drug in NAPRA Schedule ONE?

In Canada, Health Canada determines whether a drug must be sold by prescription only or can be sold over the counter. Once Health Canada classifies a drug as requiring a prescription for sale, these drugs are automatically considered to be in Schedule ONE of the National Drug Schedules (NDS).

NAPRA (National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities) adds most of these drugs to the NDS database. However, it is important to note that there is no automated link between Health Canada's database and NAPRA's database.

If you are unable to find the drug you are looking for in Schedule One of the NAPRA database, you may need to consult Health Canada's Drug Product Database (DPD), which contains the drugs listed in Schedule F of the Food and Drug Regulations.

