



Fact Sheet: Nurse Practitioners (NPs) Prescribing Methadone

Methadone is a controlled substance used for opioid dependence treatment and analgesia. Pursuant to changes to the [Controlled Drugs and Substance Act](#) (CDSA), and the removal of the section 56(1) class exemption requirement for methadone in the [Narcotic Control Regulations](#) (NCR), NPs are authorized to prescribe this medication.

According to the Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB) [Standards for the Practice of Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioners](#), the NP:

- 1.2 practices in accordance with current federal and provincial legislation, professional and ethical standards, and policy relevant to NP practice;
- 1.3 attains, maintains and enhances competence within own area of practice;
- 1.4 engages in evidence-informed practice by critically appraising and applying relevant research, best practice guidelines and theory;
- 1.5 incorporates knowledge of vulnerable populations, diversity, cultural safety and the determinants of health in assessment, diagnosis, and therapeutic management of the client;
- 1.12 adheres to policies regarding safe storage and transportation of controlled drugs and substances, if required in their focus of practice;
- 3.4 prescribes drugs, including controlled drugs and substances, based on a knowledge of pharmacological and physiological principles, and in accordance with the NANB NP Schedules for Ordering: Schedule "C" (See Appendix 2), provincial legislation and federal legislation; and
- 3.13 evaluates client outcomes of selected treatments and interventions, incorporating evidence-informed assessment tools, when available (ex: wound care assessment tool or a tool for assessing risk of addiction).

Methadone prescribing is considered a post-entry level competency and as such NPs who engage in this practice are accountable to attain and maintain the necessary knowledge and skill to practice competently, safely, and ethically. As methadone prescribing courses differ based on clinical indication, NANB recommends that NPs who incorporate methadone prescribing into their practice complete education, including a clinical practicum, specific to the indication for which they will be prescribing. It is also recommended to maintain record of successful completion of the course.

Activities associated with controlled substances, including prescribing methadone, are high risk. NPs are expected to understand these risks and ensure their prescribing practices are based on current evidence-informed guidelines. Employer policy relating to methadone prescribing in their practice setting must also be followed.

For any questions, please contact a NANB Nurse Consultant at 1-800-442-4417 or by email at practiceconsultation@nanb.nb.ca.