

Practice Standard for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners

Medication Inventory Management

Practice Standards set out requirements related to specific aspects of nurses' practice. They link with other standards, policies and bylaws of the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia and all legislation relevant to nursing practice.

Under the Nurses (Registered) and Nurse Practitioners Regulation, nurses¹ have authority to compound, dispense and administer medications.

Nurses may also have responsibility for managing a medication inventory in their health care organization. In some cases, the medication inventory is large and varied (for example, in remote practice) while in other cases, it is small and specialized (e.g., in a diabetic clinic).

Medication inventory management is required to promote the provision of quality medication products and services to clients. This function is only carried out by nurses when a pharmacist is not responsible for managing the medication inventory. This practice standard outlines requirements for nurses who manage a medication inventory.

Employers are responsible for providing the organizational supports necessary for the safe management of medications. Nurses collaborate with their employer to arrange for the necessary infrastructure, including quality assurance mechanisms, equipment and supplies.

Principles

1. Nurses manage the medication inventory using systems that meet clients' needs, fulfill federal and provincial legal requirements, maximize security, and minimize practice errors, omissions and unsafe practices. They
 - a) arrange the medication inventory in a systematic manner;
 - b) store medications as directed on the manufacturer's label;
 - c) check for expired medication products at least once a month and remove expired medication from the active medication inventory;

¹ "Nurse" refers to the following CRNBC registrants: registered nurses, nurse practitioners, licensed graduate nurses.



- d) do not return previously dispensed medications to the medication inventory or reuse them for another client;
 - e) employ environmentally safe medication disposal methods;
 - f) use appropriate measures to keep the medication inventory secure; and
 - g) keep medication inventory records that are current, accurate and meet legal requirements
2. Nurses use references that are relevant, accurate and current.
 3. Nurses identify and report practice errors, omissions and unsafe practices related to medication inventory and records management.
 4. Nurses identify and refer infrastructure, equipment and supply needs and deficiencies to the appropriate person, department or agency for remediation.

Glossary

Compound: To mix a drug with one or more other ingredients for the purposes of dispensing or administering the drug.

Dispense: The preparation and transfer of a medication to a client, taking steps to ensure its pharmaceutical and therapeutic suitability and its proper use. Nurses can accept payment on behalf of their employer for a medication they dispense.

For More Information

CRNBC's Standards of Practice (Professional Standards, Practice Standards, Scope of Practice Standards) assist you in understanding important issues regarding nursing practice. They are available online at www.crnbc.ca

For more information on this or any other practice issue, contact CRNBC's Practice Support at 604.736.7331 (ext. 332) or 1.800.565.6505.

CRNBC RESOURCES

Available from the [Nursing Standards](#) section of the CRNBC website

Privacy and Confidentiality Practice Standard (pub. 400)

Dispensing Medications Practice Standard (pub. 486)

Documentation Practice Standard (pub. 334)

Medication Administration Practice Standard (pub. 408)



COLLEGE OF
REGISTERED NURSES
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Medications (pub. 3)

Nurse-Managed Medication Inventory: Information for Employers (pub. 498)

Scope of Practice for Registered Nurses: Standards, Limits, Conditions (pub. 433)

OTHER RESOURCES

Provincial

[Nurses \(Registered\) and Nurse Practitioners Regulation](#)

[Pharmacy Operations and Drug Schedules Act](#)

[Drug Schedules Regulation](#)

College of Pharmacists of British Columbia

604.733.2440

1.800.663.1940

info@bcpharmacists.org

www.bcpharmacists.org

B.C. Centre for Disease Control

[Immunization Program, Management of Biologicals](#)

Federal

[Food and Drugs Act and related regulations](#)

[Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and related regulations](#)

Health Canada – Western Operational Centre

1.800.267.9675

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2855 Arbutus Street, Vancouver, BC V6J 3Y8

Tel 604.736.7331 or 1.800.565.6505

www.crnbc.ca

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