

## ETHICS STANDARD

# Licensed Practical Nurses: Professional Standards

## Introduction

The professional standards for LPNs clarify the minimum requirements for LPN practice in any setting or nursing domain (clinical practice, administration, education or research) and provide **indicators** that BCCNM uses to measure LPN practice in British Columbia (BC).

A **standard** is an expected and achievable level of performance against which actual performance can be compared. It is the minimum level of acceptable performance.

**Indicators** are used to measure the actual performance of an individual nurse. The indicators found in this document are not written in order of importance, nor are they intended to be an exhaustive list.

## Standards

### STANDARD 1: RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The licensed practical nurse maintains **standards** of nursing practice and **professional conduct** established by BCCNM.

#### Indicators

1. Maintains current registration
2. Maintains own competence to practise
3. Maintains own physical, psychological and emotional **fitness to practise**
4. Practises within own level of competence, employer policies, the LPN **scope of practice** and all relevant legislation
5. Is accountable and responsible for own nursing decisions, actions and professional conduct
6. Seeks guidance and direction as required
7. Takes action to promote safe, competent and ethical care for clients
8. **Advocates** for and/or helps to develop policies and procedures consistent with BCCNM Standards of Practice
9. Understands the role of BCCNM and its relationship to one's own practice

### STANDARD 2: COMPETENCY-BASED PRACTICE

The licensed practical nurse applies appropriate **knowledge**, skills, **judgment** and attitudes consistently in nursing practice.

### Indicators

1. Bases nursing practice on current **evidence** from **nursing science**, other sciences and the humanities
2. Knows how and where to access information to support and provide safe, competent and ethical nursing practice and care for clients
3. Uses **critical thinking** when collecting and interpreting data, planning, implementing and evaluating nursing care
4. Collects information on **client status** and care needs from a variety of sources using assessment skills and a review of pertinent clinical data
5. Identifies, analyzes and uses relevant decision support tools and data when making decisions about client status and care requirements
6. **Documents** client assessments, care needs, planned interventions and outcomes in a timely manner
7. Communicates client status to other members of the **health care team** as appropriate
8. Evaluates client responses to care and revises the plan of care as necessary
9. Responds and adapts to changes in the practice environment
10. Shares nursing knowledge with clients, colleagues, students and others
11. Communicates professionally in interactions with clients, colleagues, students and others

### STANDARD 3: CLIENT-FOCUSED PROVISION OF SERVICE

The licensed practical nurse provides nursing services and works with others in the best interest of clients.

### Indicators

1. Makes the client the primary focus when providing nursing care
2. Involves clients in identifying and prioritizing their own health goals and learning needs
3. Supports clients to learn about the health care system and to access appropriate health care services
4. Understands and communicates the contribution of nursing to the **health** of clients
5. Communicates, **collaborates** and consults with clients and other members of the health care team about client care
6. Coordinates and facilitates continuity of care services for the client
7. Supervises, leads and assigns appropriately to other members of the health care team
8. Supports and guides other members of the health care team to meet client care needs
9. Participates in and advocates for changes that improve client care and nursing practice
10. Recognizes and **reports** the **incompetent** or impaired practice or unethical conduct of another health professional to the appropriate person or body

### STANDARD 4: ETHICAL PRACTICE

The licensed practical nurse understands, upholds and promotes the ethical standards of the nursing profession.

### Indicators

1. Demonstrates honesty and integrity at all times
2. Represents self clearly and accurately with respect to name, title and role

3. Respects and protects client worth, dignity, uniqueness and **diversity**
4. Protects client information and maintains privacy and confidentiality
5. Recognizes, respects and promotes the client's right to be informed and make informed choices
6. Begins, maintains and ends nurse-client relationships in a way that puts the client's needs first
7. Identifies the effect of own values, beliefs and experiences when providing nursing care
8. Identifies ethical issues, recognizes potential conflicts; takes action to prevent or resolve them by communicating with the health care team and consulting with the appropriate people; and evaluates effectiveness of actions
9. Makes decisions about the allocation of resources under one's control based on the needs of the client
10. Recognizes and respects the contribution of others on the health care team
11. Treats colleagues, students and other health care workers in a respectful manner

## Glossary

*Advocate*: speak or act on behalf of self or others with the intent of influencing or adding voice and enhancing autonomy.

*Assign*: allocate clients or client care activities among care providers in order to meet client care needs.

*Client*: individuals (or their designated representative), families, groups and communities in receipt of nursing care. In some clinical settings, the client may be referred to as a patient or resident. In research, the client may be referred to as a participant.

*Client status*: clear, concise statement of a judgment made by a licensed practical nurse based on a holistic assessment, including the client's perspective of his or her health and/or illness responses. Other terms may be used for client status such as nursing diagnosis, clinical judgment, signs and symptoms, patient problems, patterns of health or goals.

*Collaborate*: joint communication and decision-making process with the expressed goal of working together toward identified outcomes while respecting the unique qualities and abilities of each member of the group or team. Each member of the health care team contributes within the limits of his or her legislated scope of practice and range of competencies.

*Competence*: integration and application of knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required for safe and appropriate performance in an individual's practice.

*Confidentiality*: action taken to ensure, respect and preserve a person's privacy within ethical and legal protocols.

*Critical thinking*: purposeful, disciplined and systematic process of continual questioning, logical reasoning and reflecting using interpretation, inference, analysis, synthesis and evaluation to achieve a desired outcome.

*Decision support tools*: evidence-based documents used by licensed practical nurses to guide the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of client-specific problems.

*Diversity*: encompasses acceptance and respect based on the understanding that each individual is unique. These differences include culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientations, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities and political beliefs or ideologies.

*Ethical:* fundamental disposition of the licensed practical nurse toward what is good and right. Action toward what the licensed practical nurse recognizes or believes to be the best and most appropriate practice in a particular situation.

*Evidence:* data derived from various sources including research, national guidelines, policies, consensus statements, expert opinion and quality improvement.

*Fitness to practise:* all the qualities and capabilities of an individual relevant to their capacity to practise as a nurse, including, but not limited to, any cognitive, physical, psychological or emotional condition or a dependence on alcohol or drugs that impairs their ability to practise nursing.

*Health:* state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It includes physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, psychological and social health.

*Health care team:* clients, health care professionals, unregulated care providers, students and others who may be involved in providing care.

*Incompetent practice:* practice that does not demonstrate the integration and application of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required for safe, competent and ethical practice.

*Indicator:* illustration of how a standard is applied and met. Indicators provide specific criteria that are used, when applicable, to measure the actual performance of an individual nurse.

*Judgment:* intellectual process exercised in forming a conclusion, decision and plan-of-action based upon a critical analysis of relevant evidence.

*Knowledge:* broadly interpreted to extend beyond information, facts and "knowing about," to include cognitive, experiential and intuitive sources of knowledge applied in nursing practice.

*Nursing science:* knowledge (e.g., concepts, constructs, principles, theories) of nursing derived from systematic observation, study and research.

*Professional conduct:* behaviour that upholds the profession, including, but not limited to, practising in accordance with BCCNM standards, policies and bylaws and all legislation relevant to LPN practice.

*Scope of practice:* activities nurses are educated and authorized to perform as set out in the *Nurses and Midwives Regulation* under the *Health Professions and Occupations Act* and complemented by standards, limits and conditions established by BCCNM.

*Standard:* expected and achievable level of performance against which actual performance can be compared. It is the minimum level of acceptable performance.

## Revision history

Version #	Approved by board	Bylaw in-force	Description
1.0	March 1, 2026	April 1, 2026	Initial publication

Effective April 1, 2026, this ethics standard, and any amendments to it, is made a bylaw under the authority of the *Health Professions and Occupations Act, B.C.*

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