IMPORTANT

As of Sept. 4, 2018, the following nursing colleges merged together to become the British Columbia College of Nursing Professionals (BCCNP):

- College of Licensed Practical Nurses of British Columbia (CLPNBC)
- College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (CRNBC)
- College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of British Columbia (CRPNBC)

Although the information in the document you are about to access reflects our most current information about this topic, you’ll notice the content refers to the previous nursing college that published this document prior to Sept. 4, 2018.

We appreciate your patience while we work towards updating all of our documents to reflect our new name and brand.
A Resource for Complementary & Alternative Health

More than 70% of Canadians regularly use complementary and alternative health therapies, such as vitamins and minerals, herbal products, homeopathic medicines and other natural health products to stay healthy and improve their quality of life\(^1\). Some examples include traditional First Nations healing and wellness practices, acupuncture, chiropractic, naturopathy, reflexology and Reiki.

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) care for clients at all life stages. They provide health care services for the:

a) promotion, maintenance and restoration of health, with a focus on clients with stable or predictable states of health

b) prevention, treatment and palliation of illness and injury, with a focus on stable or predictable disorders and conditions, primarily by:
   - assessing health status,
   - planning, implementing and evaluating interventions and
   - coordinating health services.

LPNs may receive orders from naturopaths or other authorized health professionals\(^2\) for complementary and alternative health therapies. [CLPNBC’s Standards of Practice](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/chn-rsc/chn-acps-eng.php) set out requirements for all LPNs in all practice settings. LPNs are responsible and accountable for their own practice whether it involves traditional, alternative or complementary care.

Each of the following standards has questions to help you reflect on your role in complementary and alternative health. If you are not sure of the answer to any question, review the standard, speak to your manager or consult a CLPNBC [Nursing Practice Advisor](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/chn-rsc/chn-acps-eng.php).

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\(^2\) LPNs can carry out orders from nine health professionals in BC: dentists, medical doctors, midwives, naturopaths, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, podiatrists, registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses. LPNs can also carry out orders from health professionals who hold an equivalent designation in Alberta, Yukon or the Northwest Territories.
Practice Standards

Practice standards set out requirements for specific aspects of LPN practice. They link with other CLPNBC standards, policies and bylaws, and all legislation relevant to LPN practice.

The following practice standards have particular relevance for LPNs working in complementary and alternative health.

Consent

Consent to health care means having the right to choose, refuse or revoke health care after being informed about the proposed plan of care. Consent is based on a legal requirement, as well as respect for clients’ rights to enough information to make decisions about their health care.

Ask yourself:

- Is the client adequately informed about the alternative or complementary therapy?
- Is the client capable of consenting? If not, do they have a substitute decision maker?
- Is there credible evidence to support the proposed therapy?
- Do I understand the proposed treatment? Am I able to answer the client’s questions?

Documentation

Documentation is any written or electronically generated information about a client that describes the care or service provided to that client. It is an integral part of nursing practice and quality care.

Ask yourself:

- Does my documentation provide a comprehensive record of the care I provided to my client?
- Is my documentation clear, concise, factual, objective, timely and legible?
- How am I safeguarding the privacy, security and confidentiality of client records?
Medication Administration and Dispensing Medications

The Nurses (Licensed Practical) Regulation authorizes LPNs to compound, dispense and administer medications. Although most medications require an order from an authorized health professional, there are some exceptions. See CLPNBC’s Scope of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses for more information.

Ask yourself:

- Do I have the knowledge, skill, critical thinking, clinical judgment and attitude required to administer or dispense this substance or medication safely?
- Do I understand the effects and side effects of this substance or medication and any possible interactions with other medications the client is taking?
- Have I taken steps to ensure the substance or medication’s pharmaceutical and therapeutic suitability for the client?
- Does the client understand how to use the medication?

Professional Standards

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

Ask yourself:

- Do I identify and use relevant decision support tools when providing care?
- Am I able to respond and adapt to changes in my practice environment?
- Am I communicating and collaborating with clients and other members of the health care team?
- Do I understand how my own values, beliefs and experiences affect the nursing care I am providing?
- Do I respect the client’s right to be informed and to make informed choices?

Scope of Practice Standards

CLPNBC’s scope of practice describes the standards, limits and conditions related to nursing activities that LPNs are educated and authorized to perform under the Nurses (Licensed Practical) Regulation in BC. It outlines
which activities LPNs can carry out autonomously and which activities require an order from an authorized health professional.

Remember, not all complementary and alternative health therapies, or the associated activities, are within the scope of practice for LPNs.

Ask yourself:

- Are there any standards, limits and conditions for this activity?
- Does this activity require an order from an authorized health professional?
- Am I aware of the standards for acting with or without an order?
- Am I competent to carry out this activity?

More Information

Email CLPNBC’s Nursing Practice Advisors or call 1 877 373 2201

CLPNBC Bylaws  CLPNBC Practice Standards

CLPNBC Professional Standards  CLPNBC Scope of Practice Standards