

Practice Direction

Assignment and Delegation to Unregulated Care Providers

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*This practice direction is a result of the collaboration
between Manitoba's nursing Colleges*



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Background

Practice directions set out requirements related to specific aspects of registered psychiatric nursing practice and provide more detailed information related to the *Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act*, the *Registered Psychiatric Nurse Regulation*, other relevant legislation, the *Standards of Psychiatric Nursing Practice* and the *CRPNM Code of Ethics*.

Unregulated care providers are formal members of the health-care team who are not regulated and who have a **scope of employment** defined by their employer based on their qualifications and education.

Unregulated care providers are accountable to their employer for their individual actions and decisions. While no legislation formally defines their role, legislation restricts certain activities and roles to **regulated professionals**. This limits the scope of employment of the unregulated care provider.

Unregulated care providers include, but are not limited to, resident aides, health care aides, service workers in the community, psychiatric assistants, home support workers, and in some settings, office assistants.

Assignment

Nurses¹ may assign unregulated care providers client care **tasks** within the unregulated care provider's scope of employment.

When assigning tasks, the nurse is required to:

- Use the **nursing process** to determine a **plan of care** and/or collaborate with other regulated professionals to determine a plan of care before assigning the task.
- Understand the scope of employment of the unregulated care provider and assign only tasks that fall within their position description and employer policies.
- Provide guidance and collaborate with the unregulated care provider.
- Collaborate with the health-care team to determine an appropriate plan for re-assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the plan of care based on an assessment of risk associated with the client, task, environment and unregulated care provider (see Appendix A).
- Intervene when unsafe or unethical practice is identified.

Interventions may include guidance, teaching and direction, clarification of the plan of care and, if necessary, reporting to the appropriate authority.

¹ In this document, the use of the word nurse refers to Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs).

Delegation

There are circumstances where it is necessary to delegate tasks to unregulated care providers in order to provide access to care.

Delegation is the extension of authority by a nurse or other regulated professional to an unregulated care provider who does not have the authority to perform the task as an **assignment** through their scope of employment. Delegation is always **client-specific** and the task cannot be further delegated or transferred to another client.

Nurses may delegate tasks outside of the unregulated care provider's scope of employment as long as the tasks meet the conditions:

- The employer supports delegation of the task.
- The task would normally be performed by a client or their family member.
- The task has defined limits and does not require the nursing process.
- The need, response and possible outcomes have been identified and documented for the client.

Making the Decision to Delegate a Task

The nurse is required to:

1. Confirm that the employer supports delegation to an unregulated care provider and follow applicable policies and procedures.
2. Be competent and authorized to perform the task they are delegating.
3. Assess the client and determine that a need exists that cannot be met through assignment of the task to an **authorized health-care provider**.
4. Assess the competence of the unregulated care provider in relation to the delegated task on the specific client.
5. Identify the risk to the client through an assessment of the client, task, unregulated care provider and environment (see Appendix A).
6. Be satisfied that the decision to delegate is appropriate in the context of the client, task, unregulated care provider and environment.
7. Include information about the decision to delegate and process of delegation when obtaining informed consent from the client for the task.
8. Document the decision to delegate.

Engaging in the Process of Delegation

The nurse is required to:

1. Provide client-specific **teaching** to the unregulated care provider until the nurse is satisfied that the unregulated care provider is competent to perform the task in the context of the task, client and environment.
2. Ensure that support and consultation is available during the performance of the task.
3. Provide periodic monitoring and evaluation of the unregulated care provider's competence.

4. Remain responsible for the decision to delegate and the ongoing assessment of the client's health status and plan of care.
 5. Utilize the nursing process to determine appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the plan of care based on assessment of the client, task, environment and unregulated care provider.
 6. Terminate the delegation if there is a change in client status or the unregulated care provider's competence which indicate that the delegation is no longer appropriate or acceptable to the client.
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Glossary

Assignment: Allocation of clients or specific client care tasks to health-care providers. Occurs within the scope of practice of a regulated professional and within the scope of employment of an unregulated care provider.

Authorized health-care provider: May be a regulated professional or an unregulated care provider. Regulated professionals are authorized through legislation and must meet requirements as set by their regulatory college to perform specific activities. Unregulated care providers are authorized by their employer through their scope of employment. Scope of employment may only include activities that are not restricted through legislation

Client-specific: Performed on a specific client. Limits of the task are specific to the individual client and cannot be transferred to another client.

Decision to delegate: Decision made by an individual nurse to extend authority to an unregulated care provider to

perform a specific task on a specific client.

Delegation: Extending authority to perform a specific client care task to an unregulated care provider who does not otherwise have the authority to perform the task.

Regulated professional: Professional regulated through legislation who provides or administers health services.

Health-care provider: Paid provider of health-care services.

Nursing process: Assessment, diagnosis or determination, planning, intervention and evaluation of and managing of the outcomes of care.

Plan of care: Written guideline for client care that documents the client's health-care needs. It includes assessment data, list of problems and therapies as well as expected criteria used to evaluate care.

Process of delegation: Process of extending authority to an unregulated care provider.

References

1. Canadian Nurses Association (2005). *Unregulated Health workers: A Canadian and Global Perspective*
2. College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia (2012). *Assignment and Delegation Guidelines for Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses*
3. College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (2014). *Assignment of Client Care: Guidelines for Registered Nurses*
4. Mohammed, Khaled, Margaret B. Nolan, Tamim Rajjo, Nilay D. Shah, Larry J. Prokop, Prathibha Varkey, MPH3, Mohammad H. Murad (2014). *Creating a Patient-Centered Health Care Delivery System: A Systematic Review of Health Care Quality from the Patient Perspective*
5. National Council of State Boards of Nursing (2016). *National Guidelines for Nursing Delegation*
6. Tourangeau, Anne et al. (2015). *The Role of Nurses in Assigning, Delegating, Teaching And Supervising Patient Care Activities To Unregulated Care Providers In Home Care A Jurisdictional Scan Of Legislation, Regulation And Policy In Canada*
7. World Health Organization (2008). *Task Shifting: rational redistribution of tasks among health workforce teams*

Appendix A: Factors to Consider when Assessing Risk to the Client

Lower Risk

Client

- Health status is well-defined and their condition is not expected to change negatively.
- Willing and able to direct care.

Task

- Has been established as routine and is performed as part of daily care.
- Is not expected to endanger the client's health or wellbeing when performed properly.
- Involves few steps and minimal technical psychomotor skill.
- Has predictable outcomes.
- Not altered in different settings.

Unregulated Care Provider

- Has previous experience performing the task.
- Has relevant foundational education.

Environment

- Receives frequent ongoing assessment and care planning by a regulated professional.
- Allows for adequate time for training, evaluation and ongoing maintenance of competence.
- Contains clearly written procedures and policies.
- Enables supervision and supports that allow monitoring of the unregulated care provider as well as opportunity for the unregulated care provider to consult as necessary.

Higher Risk

Client

- Health status is not well-defined and/ or changes or atypical responses may be anticipated.
- Has multiple health care needs.
- Unwilling or unable to direct care.

Task

- Is not routine and may vary in need.
- May endanger the client's health, mental health or overall well-being.
- Involves numerous steps and a high degree of technical/psychomotor skill.
- Has risk of unpredictable outcomes.
- Requires high degree of technical/psychomotor skill.
- May require altering in different settings.

Unregulated Care Provider

- Has never performed the delegated task.
- Has no related foundational education/competencies.

Environment

- Has limited or unavailable ongoing assessment, care planning and evaluation by a regulated health care provider.
- Has a limited amount or type of training provided.
- Does not contain written policies and procedures or has inadequate written policies and procedures.
- Does not allow for adequate supervision and support.

This publication is available in alternate formats on request

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