



What does my professional association do?

We understand that it can be confusing to navigate the roles and responsibilities of each of BC's nursing organizations.

- We have a regulatory body (the BC College of Nurses and Midwives, or BCCNM) who protect the public by ensuring that nurses are safe to practice,
- a professional association who advocate on behalf of the profession,
- and unions who work to ensure that nurses are properly remunerated at work and who advocate for better working conditions.



But in practicality, what does this really mean?

Here's an example

The Problem:

The opioid crisis has been accelerating at an alarming rate, particularly since the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic. Rates of overdose have increased and an immediate solution is required.

The Solution:

NNPBC watches, listens and seeks consultation with nurses who work with people who use substances to work on solutions-oriented approaches. We use our issues process to determine the best course of action for advocacy. NNPBC advocates to government for expanded prescribing, allowing for RNs and RPNs to prescribe alternatives to street drugs. This advocacy is framed from the point of view of nursing's ability to affect change to a complex problem. Those working on this recognize it as a step in the right direction and one of the solutions to mitigating the devastating impacts of the opioid crisis.

The Result:

On September 16, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, issues an order expanding prescriptive authority for alternatives to street drugs to RNs and RPNs.

How is this implemented?

Now that the order is signed, there is a necessity in ensuring that RNs and RPNs have the proper training and education to prescribe these alternatives. Moreover, Nursing Standards, Limits and Conditions must be modified in order to ensure that these changes are reflected.

Here's where the regulatory body comes in. The BCCNM, the College, updates the appropriate nursing standards and sets in place the framework to ensure that the process by which this happens ensures public safety.

The BC Centre for Substance Use (BCCSU) in collaboration with the College is working to guide the development of the necessary education pathways to support RNs and RPNs in prescribing controlled substances. The BCCSU does this in collaboration with nursing expertise, the College, pharmacy, representatives from the health authorities, representatives from various educational institutions, and NNPBC

Out of this group the path for RN and RPN prescribing will be made clear and this life-saving prescriptive authority will be rolled out

And then what?

At this point, we will have NPs, RNs and RPNs prescribing safe alternatives to street drugs. Of course, the overall goal is to save lives. From an association point of view, advocacy on other aspects of the opioid crisis continues.

NNPBC supports broad ideas like decriminalization and we continue to work with partners and government to make this a reality.

From a nursing perspective, at this point our union colleagues would consider this expanded role for RNs and RPNs and consider the ways in which this could be accurately reflected in terms of salary and proper working conditions.



NNPBC
Issues Management Process

- 1 An issue is identified
- 2 Fill out our [Issues Report Form](#)
- 3 NNPBC issues review group will discuss the issue and assess it's relative priority'
- 4 Staff, with input and consultation, will develop the agreed upon tools



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