

Licensed Practical Nurses

Caring Professionals



The scoop on scope

Licensed Practical Nurses play a critical role in the delivery of health care. They provide hands-on nursing care to patients at the hospital bedside, to residents in special care homes, to our seniors in home care, and also provide key support for community health initiatives.

LPNs are skilled nurses who have been trained and accredited to providing a wide range of medical assessments and procedures. They are valuable members of the health care team, but unfortunately, their role is often misunderstood.

LPNs have to fight to do the job they were trained to do and love doing. According to surveys by the Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical

Nurses, 50 per cent of LPNs in the province are not working to full scope.

The under-utilization of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) has been a long-standing problem in Saskatchewan. Although the provincial government amended the *LPN Act* in 2000 to enable LPNs to work to their full scope of training and not under the direction of an RN, many practical nurses still are not permitted to perform all of their professional skills.

Overlooking the skills of LPNs is unacceptable. Our health care system needs to maximize the skills of all professional nursing staff.

What can be done to fully utilize LPNs?

Here are the top five suggestions from a recent survey by the Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses:

- Educate RNs about LPN competencies.
- Clarify the roles of RNs and LPNs.
- Receive clear policies from Saskatchewan's regional health authorities.
- Educate senior managers and administrators on LPN competencies.
- Educate other staff on LPN competencies.

In the upcoming months, we will be conducting our own survey to evaluate the state of scope of practice in our members. Stay tuned!



"The landscape of healthcare service delivery has changed over the many years of my nursing career but the one constant that has remained throughout has been my inability to provide the best care possible to my patients because I am often not allowed to use all the skills and training I possess."

Gloria Fingas, LPN

For more information go to:
www.cupesaskhcc.ca/

