

The CRPNS review

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN PSYCHIATRIC NURSING

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE AT A GLANCE

RPNs have the ability to work in independent practice. However, independent practice comes with increased responsibility and clear regulatory expectations. Without the structure of an employer, it becomes essential to have strong systems in place, such as clear policies and procedures, secure recordkeeping, adequate professional liability protection and business insurance, and a robust plan for managing risks and emergencies.

RPNs must ensure they have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and education to provide safe and effective care in the area they are practicing in. Regularly evaluating your practice, seeking feedback, and identifying areas for growth help maintain high standards of care.

NOTIFICATION OF INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

When entering independent practice RPNs must notify the CRPNS by completing and submitting the [Notification of Independent Practice Form](#). This form must be kept current and updated whenever an RPN changes or expands their area(s) of independent practice, requiring resubmission at that time. It must also be completed on an annual basis at time of renewal.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE GUIDELINE

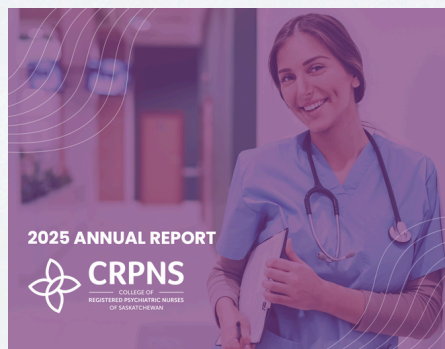
Reviewing the [CRPNS Independent Practice Guideline for RPNs](#) is essential for understanding the professional responsibilities associated with this type of practice and to be aware of the regulatory requirements.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

RPNs in independent practice are required to be familiar with the requirements as identified in the [CRPNS Bylaws \(2026, page 36\)](#). The Bylaw outlines additional regulatory requirements for RPNs who practise independently, including annual reporting to the College and maintaining adequate business insurance. It also outlines CRPNS requirement to conduct audits. Should you be selected for audit you will be required to provide specific information that supports you are practicing safely and in the public interest.

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The [2025 Annual Report](#) is now available, highlighting another year of growth and continued commitment to public protection and professional regulation. Within the report, one key highlight is the increase in registrants, rising to 842 in 2025 from 822 in 2024, reflecting growth in Saskatchewan's psychiatric nursing workforce. The report outlines organizational activities, regulatory work, and financial performance over the past year, offering a comprehensive look at how CRPNS supports safe, competent psychiatric nursing practice across the province.



MAY
11-17

National Nursing Week
Nursing Week is an opportunity to recognize the vital contributions of RPNs. Their commitment & care make a difference in every setting.

MAY
26 & 28

CNPS Webinar:
Legal Risk Management for Nurses Practicing in the Mental Health Environment

[click here for more info](#)

JUNE
9 & 10

CNPS Webinar:
Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Nursing Practice

[click here for more info](#)

JUNE
21

National Indigenous Peoples Day:
A day to celebrate the cultures, traditions, & contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples.

JUNE
27

National Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day
This day raises awareness about the impact of trauma and highlights the importance of support for those working in healthcare & frontline settings.

↑ upcoming events



Ask the Regulator!

THE POWER OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN NURSING

Professional Identity in Nursing (PIN) is a key foundation of safe, ethical, high-quality practice and encompasses four domains: values and ethics, knowledge, nurse as leader, and professional comportment ([Geoghan Marold, Strouse & Butcher, 2025](#)). PIN reflects how RPNs understand and express their roles, responsibilities, skills, and ethical commitments, shaping how they think, act, and interact in clinical settings. PIN supports accountability and public protection, requires a clear understanding of the role, adherence to standards, and the application of specialized mental health knowledge. In simple terms, it's how a nurse sees themselves as a professional and how they consistently practice, communicate, and uphold the standards of nursing.

PIN is shaped by both personal experience and the work environment, including a sense of belonging and alignment between personal values and professional expectations ([Cornett et al., 2023](#)). A strong professional identity is linked to better care, stronger therapeutic relationships, and greater ability to manage the emotional demands of practice. It also supports confidence, job satisfaction, and long-term engagement, while reinforcing the psychiatric nurse's advocacy role and professional presence.

PIN evolves throughout an RPN's career, which emphasizes the importance of continuing education, reflective practice, and adherence to ethical codes. The RPN's responsibility for reflection and self-awareness, continuous professional development, leadership and maintenance of quality psychiatric nursing practice are outlined within the standards of psychiatric nursing practice ([Standards of Psychiatric Nursing](#)).

QUESTION: What is the difference between the scope of practice of an RPN working in long term care versus a general medical ward in a hospital?

An RPN's scope of practice remains the same regardless of setting, grounded in the entry-to-practice competencies and core education, as defined by CRPNS. However, how that scope is applied is influenced by the practice environment, the employer, and the needs and complexity of the client population being served.

For example, long-term care settings may focus more on chronic conditions, cognitive changes, and ongoing support, while hospital medical units often involve higher acuity, rapid changes in patient status, and more intensive interdisciplinary intervention. In both environments, RPNs must ensure their practice aligns with their scope as an RPN and their scope of employment.

RPNs can and do practise within general medical settings, where they are valued members of the team. RPNs are prepared to manage a range of medical care needs, in addition to bringing their specialized expertise in mental health, substance use, and holistic patient care. Mental health and substance use needs are present across all areas of health care, including general medical units. For example:

- *About 1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health concern annually*
- *A substantial proportion of hospital inpatients have co-occurring mental health or substance use needs, regardless of admission reason*

QUESTION: How is CRPNS advocating for RPNs to work on medical units in hospitals province-wide?

The role of CRPNS is not to advocate for employees or direct where RPNs should work, but to protect the public by ensuring that practice environments support safe care delivery, effective interprofessional collaboration, and alignment with the RPN scope of practice.

When concerns arise that the RPN scope of practice is not fully understood or utilized, CRPNS engages with employers and other system partners to support clarity around scope and competencies. These discussions focus on ensuring RPNs are appropriately integrated and able to practise to their full scope in a manner that supports safe, high-quality patient care.

PRACTICE *spotlight*

RPNs in Research: Contributing to Evidence-Based Practice Through a Retrospective Study

RPNs play an important role in health research as experts in mental health care. Their close engagement with patients through therapeutic relationships and interdisciplinary collaboration positions them to identify meaningful clinical questions, support data collection in real-world settings, and contribute to the interpretation and application of findings in ways that enhance practice and health care systems. In the featured article from the International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, titled "[The Use of Community Treatment Orders in People with Substance Induced Psychosis](#)", Christine Gullacher, RPN, examines whether Community Treatment Orders (CTOs), combined with long-acting injectable antipsychotics, improve outcomes for people with substance-induced psychosis. Using a retrospective study in Saskatchewan, the author found that patients on CTOs had significantly fewer hospital readmissions and emergency department visits within one year compared to those not on CTOs. The research suggests this approach may reduce pressure on the health care system and help guide treatment planning for this population, while also noting the need to further consider its broader implications and patient experience.



Regulatory Roadmap

CRPNS COMPLAINT PROCESS

A key legislative requirement of the CRPNS as the regulator of RPNs in Saskatchewan with the mandate of protection of the public is to investigate all complaints received about a registrants practice. The CRPNS is required to have a Professional Conduct Committee (PCC). The PCC is composed of RPNs and public representatives. As set out in legislation, the PCC, is responsible for reviewing and making determinations regarding complaints of professional misconduct and professional incompetence. According to The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act (1993) professional misconduct is “any matter, conduct, or thing, whether or not disgraceful or dishonorable that:

- Is harmful to the best interests of the public or the members of the association;
- Tends to harm the standing of the profession;
- Is a breach of this Act or the bylaws; or
- Is a failure to comply with an order of the professional conduct committee, the discipline committee, or the council”.

Professional incompetence is “the display by a member of:

- **A lack of knowledge, skill or judgement; or**
- **A disregard for the welfare of members of the public serviced by the profession;**

of a nature or to an extent that demonstrates that the member is unfit to continue in the practice of the profession”.

When a complaint is received, the registrant is notified, provided with a copy of the complaint and provided the opportunity to respond to the allegations. This information is utilized in developing the investigatory roadmap. During the process it is important that registrants act professionally and ethically:

- It is important that the registrant provide a detailed factual and honest response
- Registrants must not contact or confront the complainant
- Registrants must not alter any documentation, records or evidence
- If wanting to refer to a chart or documentation, they must ensure that they have authorized access. If not, they should seek out guidance from the employer in how to obtain the information

Throughout the investigation, the member, witnesses, and others who may have information may be interviewed. Once the investigation is completed, the PCC will review the investigation report and will make a decision regarding the evidence of professional misconduct or incompetence.

The decisions that the PCC can make include:

- No further action
- Letter of guidance
- Alternative Dispute Resolution – this involves entering into an agreement that may include education, training, monitoring, counselling, treatment, assessment of a member’s capacity or fitness to practice, conditions, or requirements on the member’s certificate of registration
- Recommend Discipline Committee hear and determine outcome.

Following the outcome decision by the PCC, the member and the complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome. The PCC is committed to protection of the public while supporting members with the lowest possible resolution.



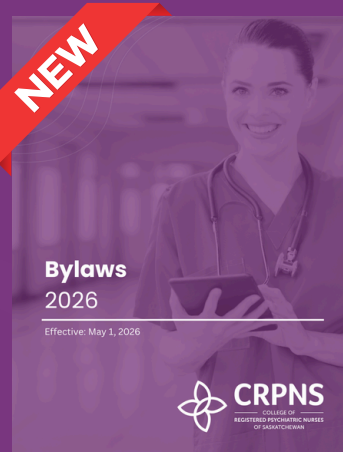
Insights & Info

Happy Nursing Week!

CRPNS participated in the National Post's (Regina and Saskatoon) Nursing Week Feature (right), highlighting the qualities and expertise of RPNs. The feature recognized the important contributions RPNs make to patient care and showcased their expertise, skill, and value within the healthcare system. CRPNS recognizes the dedication of RPNs across Saskatchewan and the need for specialized psychiatric nursing within the province and beyond.

• UPDATED CRPNS BYLAWS PUBLISHED

The updated CRPNS Bylaws have now been officially published, reflecting recent changes to membership categories, including adding a supervised practice experience for those who have not met the hour requirement to renew licensure, independent practice, and operational procedures. Registrants are required to review the updated Bylaws to stay informed about key revisions and how they impact practice.



Registered Psychiatric Nurses:

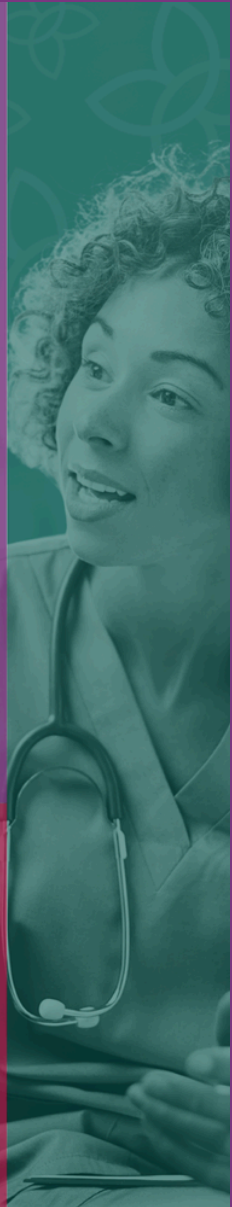
- ✓ The leading nursing experts in mental health and substance use care.
- ✓ Build trusting, therapeutic relationships for individualized treatment.
- ✓ Bridging mental and physical health through integrated, compassionate nursing care.



CRPNS

COLLEGE OF
REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSES
OF SASKATCHEWAN

**FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT WHAT WE DO:
WWW.CRPNS.CA**



**Have a question to suggest for our next newsletter Q&A?
[Share your question with us via our anonymous survey.](#)**

CONTACT US

#205 - 4401 ALBERT ST.
REGINA, SK
S4S 6B6

T: 306.586.4617

E: INFO@CRPNS.CA

www.crpns.com



CRPNS

COLLEGE OF
REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSES
OF SASKATCHEWAN