



Complementary and Alternative Therapies





CLPNS

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The legislated mandate of the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Saskatchewan is to protect the public through the regulation of Licensed Practical Nurses.

Complementary and alternative therapies (CAT) are a distinct and specialized body of knowledge and acquired skills that a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) may perform. However, they fall outside the authorized scope of practice of LPNs in Saskatchewan.

Traditional health practices used by Indigenous clients are also considered complementary and alternative therapies. It is important to honour and respect these practices when providing care to clients.

The institutions offering education and training related to CAT may require or prefer students to be trained professionals (RN, LPN, or RPN). However, that does not mean that the knowledge and skills acquired are part of the professional's regulated scope of practice.

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Saskatchewan (CLPNS) regulates the profession under the authority of *The Licensed Practical Nurses Act, 2000*. Through the Act, the CLPNS Council has authorization to approve Saskatchewan practical nurse education programs and to establish, maintain, and enforce registration requirements for LPN licensure.

The practical nurse education program is the foundation of the LPN scope of practice. Knowledge and skills developed beyond the practical nurse program are built directly upon the competencies developed in the program. Specific specialized areas of practice obtained through additional education are outlined and authorized in the CLPNS Regulatory Bylaws. As the regulator, the CLPNS must reasonably determine an appropriate level of competence in LPN practice.

Nursing practice focuses on evidence-based nursing practice and traditional medical treatments. Complementary and alternative therapies may lack reliable research and evidence-based practice to support their effectiveness and safety, making it difficult to establish regulatory standards. As a result, the CLPNS cannot regulate complementary and alternative therapies. Because of its unfamiliarity with education and practice, the CLPNS cannot establish the appropriate level of competence in complementary and alternative therapies.

Complementary and alternative therapies are becoming increasingly common as the public seeks additional forms of therapy and treatments for their health issues. LPNs may provide one or more complementary and alternative therapies in addition to their nursing practice and thus may become involved in dual practice.

- Dual practice occurs when an LPN provides both nursing services and non-nursing services to clients.

The CLPNS does not restrict an LPN from performing CAT. However, it is not part of their individual or professional LPN practice.

LPNs should consider the following if they choose to provide CAT.

- The CLPNS does not regulate CAT.
- The LPN should not provide CAT in their employment setting unless they are authorized to do so by their employer.
- The client's right to refuse any or all parts of an assessment or treatment, regardless of the therapy.
- The LPN should NOT represent themselves as an LPN while providing CAT.
- LPNs may be accountable for errors or harm caused if they attempt to provide CAT within their nursing practice.
- The hours accumulated in CAT are NOT reportable as practice hours toward licensure.



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