



Draft LPN regulation could negatively impact staffing mix and utilization

HEU to consult LPN members on proposed changes

Late last week, the B.C. government announced proposed changes to the regulation that governs LPN practice.

As anticipated, the regulation moves away from LPNs being under the direct supervision of an RN to a "restricted activities" model. A model that has the potential to promote better teamwork and interdisciplinary collaboration, while recognizing how much the LPN profession has moved forward.

If adopted as is, however, the revised regulation could have a significant impact on employer decisions around staffing mix and it could negatively impact LPN utilization.

In particular, the draft regulation from the Ministry of Health deems far too many of the higher risk activities performed by LPNs as requiring an "order" from an RN or other health care professional. These changes to the regulation would significantly limit LPNs' independence of practice.

For example, the regulation would only permit an LPN in a residential setting to care for a skin wound after first asking an RN or another health professional to assess the resident and order the care. The same would go for administering oxygen – an LPN could carry out this activity, but only after an RN assessment is made.

Government is accepting input on the proposals until December 21, at which point they may or may not extend the consultation period depending on the feedback they receive.

HEU will make a submission to the Ministry of Health, but before we do, we want to hear from our 2,500-plus LPN members. Details on HEU's consultation with LPN members will be issued soon.

In 2011, HEU consulted with over 60 LPNs from across the province at a conference on moving the LPN profession forward, and through an online survey of nearly 1,000 LPNs. LPNs clearly asserted they want a say in any changes to the regulation of their practice.

For more information about HEU's advocacy work on behalf of LPNs' independent nursing profession, please visit <http://www.heu.org/lpnsinfo/resources>.

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