



MEMO

TO: LPNs

FROM: Wanda Wadman, Chief Executive Officer/Registrar, CLPNNL

DATE: December 11, 2018

RE: Cannabis Legalization and Practice Expectations for Licensed Practical Nurses in Newfoundland and Labrador

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On October 17, 2018, the Government of Canada legalized recreational cannabis use. While the law has changed, the accountabilities of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in Newfoundland and Labrador have not. As self-regulating professionals, LPNs are required to ensure their practice and conduct adheres to their requirement to provide safe, competent, and ethical care. Each nursing professional is accountable to assess their fitness to practice. Fitness to practice refers to the physical, mental and emotional health necessary to provide care that meets the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. LPNs must be able to apply critical thinking, critical inquiry and clinical judgement in order to provide safe, competent and ethical nursing care. Mood altering substances such as cannabis can impair the judgement and ability of nurses which can put clients at risk. Working while impaired by any substance (i.e. opiates, alcohol, and/or cannabis) can affect the LPNs cognitive function, physical health and fitness to practice and may constitute a breach of the Standards of Practice which may result in an allegation of conduct deserving of sanction and thus a professional conduct review by CLPNNL.

LPNs are also responsible to report to their employer when they believe a colleague is impaired and may compromise client safety. It is important for each LPN to know related employer policies in the practice area as well as possible signs and symptoms of impairment. LPNs should also familiarize themselves with federal and provincial laws regarding the use of recreational and medicinal cannabis for their own practice considerations.

See the following additional resources on the CLPNNL website to learn more:

CLPNNL/ARNNL Memo on Cannabis

CLPNNL definitions of *Conduct Deserving of Sanction*

CLPNNL Interpretive Document *Duty to Report*

Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada

Practice Guideline on Cannabis CLPNNL