



NSCN Announces a First in Canada Licensure Process for Nurses Coming to Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA – As Nova Scotia’s nursing regulator, the Nova Scotia College of Nursing’s (NSCN) role is to ensure that all nurses providing nursing services for Nova Scotians are qualified to do so. The public can depend on NSCN to license those who meet registration requirements and demonstrate they have the knowledge, skills, and competence required to safely and ethically practice as a nurse.

Over the coming weeks, NSCN will implement a new first-in-Canada approach to registration and licensure that will establish a fast and predictable pathway to licensure in our province. Registered nurses who demonstrate good standing and good character and are licensed in Canada, the Philippines, India, Nigeria, USA, UK, Australia, or New Zealand, are eligible for registration and licensure in Nova Scotia immediately with no additional requirements other than passing the entrance exam. Using an equity lens, the newly developed approach yields consistent and predictable licensing outcomes for nurses educated in Nova Scotia, Canada, and seven specific countries that equate to 87% of NSCN’s current international applicants.

The new registration and licensing approach will:

- Reduce the overall application process timeline for nurses licensed in good standing in another Canadian jurisdiction from five days to 24 hours. **(Effective March 29, 2023)**
- Reduce the overall application process timeline for international nurses in good standing from the Philippines, India, Nigeria, USA, UK, Australia, and New Zealand from over a year to a matter of a few weeks. Nurses from these countries will apply directly to NSCN. **(Effective May 1, 2023)**

“I am pleased to share what is truly a first-in-the-country approach to licensing international and Canadian nurses in Nova Scotia,” says Sue Smith, CEO and Registrar of the Nova Scotia College of Nursing. “The new approach will significantly decrease licensing time; increase licensure of nurses; reduce administrative requirements; and is aligned with new initiatives of health care partners. It’s a safe and faster process for nurses who want to work in our province, which is a good news story for all Nova Scotians.”

“This is great news. We need more nurses across the province, and we need to make it easier for nurses who want to come and build their lives here to get to work quickly,” said Michelle Thompson, Minister of Health and Wellness. “During COVID, the College saw the need, and responded quickly to support patient care. These most recent changes continue on this work and deliver solutions that align with government’s direction to all health system partners in the province to think differently and move quickly.”

Funding from the Provincial Nursing Strategy and Department of Health and Wellness helped enable NSCN to dedicate the organizational resources quickly to identify and implement these solutions to support the supply of nurses in Nova Scotia.

While NSCN's current focus is on Canada and the seven countries noted above, the approach is scalable. All applicants for licensure in Nova Scotia are required to pass the national entry-to-practice exam to demonstrate they have the individual competencies required to practice safely and competently and will have the opportunity to enter practice with a conditional licence while waiting to successfully complete the exam.

Additional Facts and Statistics

- Over the past five years, applicants from the following five countries account for 87% of all NSCN's international applicants.
 - Philippines – 42%
 - India – 25%
 - Nigeria - 10%
 - USA – 6%
 - UK – 4%
 - *23 other countries - 13%*
- NSCN registered more international nurses in 2022 than in 2019, 2020 and 2021 combined. In 2022, NSCN registered and licensed 282 international nurses as a licensed practical nurse, registered nurse or nurse practitioner.
- Since 2020, NSCN has made changes in key areas:
 - Adding more options to meet the English language proficiency registration requirement
 - Providing earlier access to the national registration exam
 - Authorizing earlier entry to practice
 - Authorizing earlier return to practice
 - Revised the process so temporary licences for travel nurses coming to NS could be processed in less than one day
 - Policy and process changes to maximize efficiencies and reduce possible bottlenecks.

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