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NSCN Helps Internationally Educated Applicants by Streamlining Registration and Licensing Processes and Collaborating with Health Partners

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 depends on NSCN to ensure that licenses are only granted to those who demonstrate they have the knowledge, skill, and competence required to safely and ethically practice as a nurse. NSCN does this by establishing registration requirements all applicants must meet.

NSCN continues to comprehensively review all registration and licensing processes to ensure they are relevant, flexible and positively contribute to the supply of nurses while simultaneously meeting NSCN’s legislated mandate to protect the public.

“We have been working hard to streamline our registration and licensing processes for internationally educated nurses (IENs) and have made changes in five key areas,” says Sue Smith, CEO and Registrar at NSCN. “These changes will favourably impact the number of qualified nurses to enter the health care system, which will positively impact the care of all Nova Scotians.”

These changes include:

- Adding more options to meet the English language proficiency registration requirement, such as an employer’s assessment of language proficiency, or completion of nursing and non-nursing education in Canada.
- Providing earlier access to the National Registration Exam, such as enabling IENs meeting certain specific criteria an opportunity to write the national registration RN or LPN exam instead of completing a competence assessment or bridging/re-entry nursing education.
- Authorizing earlier entry to practice with specific parameters while the IEN is working towards fulfilling their outstanding registration requirements. Examples of parameters include requiring the IEN to submit additional documentation, or complete additional education within a timeframe.
- Enabling internationally and domestically educated nurses meeting some, but not all the required number of practice hours to return to practice with specific conditions and restrictions on their license. The condition(s) may require the nurse to: develop a return-to-practice plan with their employer that includes at least 120 hours of 1:1 mentorship; develop a learning plan; meet with an NSCN practice consultant; and provide NSCN with progress updates.
- Policy and process changes, including reducing the documentation required of IENs.

NSCN continues to collaborate with key partners towards solutions, including Nova Scotia Health (NSH) where approximately 8,000 nurses – registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nurse practitioners - work in every area of the health care system. Key to Nova Scotia Health’s plans is providing the nursing workforce with professional development opportunities; supporting nurses in bringing their skills and expertise to patient care and team collaborations; and taking down barriers to how they are engaged

with and hired. In June 2022, NSCN applied for and received a grant from government through the Provincial Nursing Strategy. This funding will support NSCN's ability to continue to make even more impactful changes to the registration and licensure process that will further reduce the time it takes qualified IENs to receive a nursing license and provide safe and quality nursing care to Nova Scotians.

"We have a legislated mandate to protect the public of Nova Scotia through our actions as the province's nursing regulator," says Smith. "We are confident that our ongoing initiatives and the collective efforts of collaborating partners in the health care community – including government and Nova Scotia Health – will support us to register more nurses to provide Nova Scotians with safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing care."

As of July 31, 2022, NSCN has registered and licensed 212 international applicants as RNs or LPNs this year compared to 152 for all of 2021. For nearly half of these nurses, this was their first time being licensed in Canada. There are 185 applicants still in the registration and licensing process. NSCN continues to see growth in international applicants.

For more information, visit the NSCN website [here](#).

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Media contact:

Hanna Miller
Nova Scotia College of Nursing
Communications Coordinator
Hanna.Miller@nscn.ca