

The Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) is the regulatory body for licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in Nova Scotia. Our mandate is to protect the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing services by our registrants. The term nurse in this document refers to LPNs, RNs and NPs unless otherwise stated.

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Our practice support tools are developed using current reference material. The source of this material is available upon request.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that would traditionally require human intelligence. These systems can enable computers to analyze data, recognize patterns, learn from experience and make recommendations by recognizing patterns identified in data.

AI has the potential to streamline care and reduce registrant workload by automating administrative tasks, facilitating communication within the healthcare team and prioritizing clients needs. It can provide these evidence-based recommendations by accessing client electronic health records, research literature and medical devices.

These systems cannot replace the role of human care providers or their clinical judgement.

Registrants are required to meet their standards of practice and code of ethics while navigating the use of AI in their practice.

This tool is a resource for registrants in all practice settings who are using or considering using AI to assist in their understanding of:

- Maintaining privacy and confidentiality
- Informed Consent
- Bias

Additionally, this tool provides registrants with concepts they should consider prior to using AI in practice. Like all regulatory tools, use this document in conjunction with your employer policy, applicable legislation and the standards of practice and code of ethics.

Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality

Registrants who use AI tools in their practice must be aware of how the tool collects, uses, discloses, stores, and retains the client's information. They are accountable to share this information with the client in a way they will understand or refer the client to where they can find this information such as the AI company website or employer information. Privacy protections are crucial to make sure personal data is handled responsibly and in compliance with the applicable legislation

Registrants are responsible to make sure the client's confidential personal health data is protected. Clients should be informed about any potential privacy impacts related to their personal data.

The standards of practice and code of ethics set out the legal and professional requirements for practice and describe the expectations of registrants in their practice to protect a client's right to privacy and confidentiality.

Registrants are responsible for educating themselves on how the AI tool collects, uses, discloses, stores, and retains the client's information.

[Cybersecurity](#) is one of the most important factors to consider when maintaining privacy and confidentiality. Implementing and using AI tools requires robust cybersecurity protections to mitigate risks related to endangering client's privacy. Registrants should ensure AI tools used in their practice comply with employer cybersecurity policies.

Informed Consent

It is important to be transparent about AI technologies being used in your practice. Registrants should provide clients with information about how the AI systems are being used and discuss the risks and benefits. This information will assist clients with understanding the capabilities, limitations, and potential impacts. Employer policies may describe how [consent](#) is obtained.

Always obtain consent before using an AI tool to record client conversations.

Bias

AI systems rely on data to perform tasks, make predictions, and support decision-making processes. Since the algorithms created by AI are designed by humans, there is risk that human and societal biases may be embedded within them. AI systems, while offering significant benefits, can also produce unintended harms, particularly for equity-deserving communities in Nova Scotia. These harms may result in unfair treatment or outcomes.

The development and use of AI systems must be safe, respectful and acknowledge the values of all clients. The goal is to ensure that all patient populations can benefit from AI technologies equitably, without bias or exclusion.

It is essential to recognize that the data used to train and operate AI may not reflect the race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital/family status, genetic characteristics, disability, and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted. (Canadian Human Rights Act)

Legal and Risk Management

Consider seeking general legal and risk management advice from your employer's or your liability provider before using AI in practice. Self-employed registrants can reach out to their business consultant or their respective liability providers.

- LPNs receive professional liability protection through Lloyd's Insurance. For more information on your coverage, [click here](#).
- RNs, RN-APs and NPs receive professional liability protection through the Canadian Nurses Protective Society. For more information, [click here](#).

Before using AI consider the following:

- Registrants are accountable for their own practice and use of AI tools, ensuring they adhere to the standards, code of ethics and regulatory policies set by NSCN
- Follow any employer authorizing mechanism (i.e. policy) when using AI. In the absence of employer policy, you should seek guidance from your manager about the use of AI in your practice.
- Ensure you are following relevant provincial or federal privacy legislation when using AI systems to process health information or personal information.
- Clearly communicate when and how you are using AI in interactions with the public.
- When obtaining informed consent you should provide clients with information about the AI tool being used and discuss the benefits and risks of this technology in practice. Always obtain informed consent before using AI in client care.
- Registrants that use AI tools in their practice are responsible to make sure clients' confidential data is protected.
- Ensure you understand the AI terms of use and privacy policy and where the data being generated is being stored.
- Recommendations from the AI system are only as accurate as the client data available to the AI system.
- Registrants must use critical thinking and clinical expertise when applying AI to their practice. The use of AI systems should never replace the role of human care providers, nor substitute their clinical judgement.
- When using AI seek out evidence to inform best practice. Registrants should always consider the source of the information and that references are accurate and legitimate.
- Be mindful that data generated by AI may not address the cultural, racial, gender, intersectional or linguistic needs of all persons. Know how to report bias when using AI technology.

- Registrants are responsible for their documentation including accuracy and completeness. Carefully review AI generated notes to ensure the correct information is collected before saving in client's medical record.

Suggested Readings

- [Confidentiality and Privacy Of Personal Health Information Practice Guideline](#)
- [Standards of Practice](#)
- [Code of Ethics](#)
- [Documentation Guideline for Nurses](#)
- [Cultural Safety and Humility Position Statement](#)

For further information on anything contained within this tool, please contact an NSCN Practice Consultant at practice@nscn.ca.