

## Delegation to Unregulated Care Provider

### **Can RNs delegate tasks to unregulated care providers (UCP) such as Continuing Care Aides or Special Care Aides? What are RNs responsible for when delegating tasks? What are the UCPs responsible for?**

- Utilizing their in-depth nursing knowledge base, critical thinking and decision-making skills it is within the RN scope of practice to determine when it is appropriate to delegate a task to an UCP (1).
- RNs demonstrate leadership in the coordination of health care by delegating and monitoring the performance of delegated activities by UCPs (2).
- RNs cannot delegate the overall accountability for the appropriate assignment and oversight of client care and are accountable for the decision to delegate components of care (3).
- Key elements of supervision between the point of care RN and the UCP they are delegating care to are: directing, assigning, delegating, guiding, and monitoring an individual's performance of an activity to influence its outcome. (4)
- The UCP is accountable for competently performing the delegated task (5).
- The UCP is also accountable for identifying when they are not able to safely perform a task and communicating that to the RN.
- When the client's nursing care needs are complex, the RN cannot delegate or assign the nursing care plan or the nursing assessment to another care provider (6).
- When, in the opinion of the RN, client care would be jeopardized, the RN has the authority and professional responsibility to refuse to assign or delegate any part of the nursing care plan or nursing assessment (7).
- A decision tree for delegation to UCPs can help RNs and managers determine the appropriateness of delegation (8).

### **Q&A**

#### **- What should RNs consider when deciding to delegate?**

There are eight areas to be considered:

1. Client choice
2. Level of client stability and predictability
3. Competencies of the care provider
4. Potential for harm
5. Frequency of occurrence
6. Level of decision-making
7. Scope of employment
8. Ability for the client to care for themselves

A RN working with the clients and UCPs (at the point of care) must consider if the task is appropriate for the patient in their current situation. Does the UCP have the proper education and demonstrated competence to perform the task? Are there policies in place to support the delegation? Is there appropriate supervision in place to evaluate and monitor the UCP's abilities and the patient's response to the activity? (8)

*RN is used to represent all SRNA members including RN(NP)s and RN(AAP)s.*

- **Do RNs delegate to other regulated nurses such as RPNs or LPNs?**

**No.** RPNs and LPNs have legislated scopes of practice and therefore do not require delegation. RNs are accountable for safe assignment of care to regulated nurses.

**SRNA Resources**

[Interpretation of the RN Scope of Practice, 2015](#)

[Standards and Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses, 2013](#)

**External Resources**

[Canadian Nurses Protective Society, InfoLaw: Delegation to Other Health Care Workers](#)

[American Nurses Association/National Council of State Boards of Nursing Joint Statement on Delegation](#)

| <b>Resource Key</b> |  |                        |
|---------------------|--|------------------------|
| <b>Number</b>       | <b>Resource</b>  | <b>Reference</b>       |
| 1                   | Interpretation of the RN Scope of Practice, 2015                                   | p. 1                   |
| 2                   | Standards and Foundation Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses (2013) | Competency 75 b, p. 16 |
| 3                   | Interpretation of the RN Scope of Practice, 2015                                   | p. 8 and p. 19         |
| 4                   | Interpretation of the RN Scope of Practice, 2015                                   | p. 9                   |
| 5                   | Interpretation of the RN Scope of Practice, 2015                                   | p. 8                   |
| 6                   | Interpretation of the RN Scope of Practice, 2015                                   | p. 10                  |
| 7                   | Interpretation of the RN Scope of Practice, 2015                                   | p. 10                  |
| 8                   | Interpretation of the RN Scope of Practice, 2015                                   | p. 24-25               |
| 9                   | Interpretation of the RN Scope of Practice, 2015                                   | p. 20-23               |

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