

Responding to Professional Practice Issues (PPIs)

I am an RN who recently came from another province to become a nursing unit manager. At the first unit meeting, I was made aware of an ongoing professional practice issue the staff want resolved as soon as possible. They informed me that they are following the steps in a resolution process outlined by the SRNA. Please help me understand the process, and my ethical and professional obligations as an RN in this situation.

The resolution process you mentioned is described in the SRNA's *Resolving Professional Practice Issues: A Toolkit for Registered Nurses*. It provides guidance to RNs who believe they may have identified a professional practice concern in the workplace that needs to be addressed. This document is utilized with *Registered Nurse Practice Standards (2019)* and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses (2017)*. Links to SRNA resources are included below.

Some managers are RNs themselves and their responsibilities and accountabilities are the same. Some managers are not RNs and may have their own professional responsibilities and accountabilities as part of a regulated profession. All managers of RNs are required to understand the professional responsibilities and accountabilities of the RNs they manage and to support the RN to uphold the standards of RN practice.

The responsibilities and accountabilities of RN practice that apply to this situation are:

- RNs are accountable and accept responsibility for their own actions and decisions (1).
- RNs demonstrate effective collaborative practice, including communication, problem-solving strategies, decision-making and conflict resolution (2).
- RNs challenge and take action on unclear or questionable orders, decisions or actions made by other health care team members (3).
- RNs utilize knowledge of the health care system to improve health care services (4).
- RNs practice in accordance with the current CNA *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses* (5).
- RNs take action to create a safe work environment that contributes to healthy teams and optimal client outcomes (6).
- RNs participate and contribute to health care team development by [...] contributing registered nursing perspectives on issues being addressed by the health care team (7).
- RNs practice in accordance with *The Registered Nurses Act, 1988*, other current relevant legislation, bylaws, scope of practice, standards, entry-level competencies, guidelines and employer policies (8).
- RNs collaborate with the employer and other organizations as needed to resolve professional practice issues (9).
- When the integrity of RNs is compromised by patterns of institutional behaviour or professional practice that erode the ethical environment and the safety of persons receiving care (generating moral distress), RNs express and report their concern individually or collectively to the appropriate authority or committee (10).
- RNs utilize practice standards, best practice guidelines, policies and research to minimize risk and maximize safety, well-being and/or dignity for persons receiving care (11).

- RNs work collaboratively to develop a moral community. As part of this community, all RNs acknowledge their responsibility to contribute to positive and healthy practice environments. RNs support a climate of trust that sponsors openness, encourages the act of questioning the status quo and supports those who speak out in good faith to address concerns (e.g. whistleblowing). RNs protect whistleblowers who have provided reasonable grounds for their concerns (12).

SRNA Resources

[Code of Ethics for registered nurses \(2017\)](#)

[Registered Nurse Practice Standards \(2019\)](#)

[Registered Nurse Entry Level Competencies \(2019\)](#)

[Resolving Professional Practice Issues: A Toolkit for Registered Nurses \(2019\)](#)

Resource Key		
Number	Resource	Reference
1	Registered Nurse Practice Standards (2019)	Indicator 1, page 3
2	Registered Nurse Practice Standards (2019)	Indicator 5, page 3
3	Registered Nurse Practice Standards (2019)	Indicator 8, page 3
4	Registered Nurse Practice Standards (2019)	Indicator 21, page 5
5	Registered Nurse Practice Standards (2019)	Indicator 26, page 5
6	Registered Nurse Practice Standards (2019)	Indicator 34, page 5
7	Registered Nurse Practice Standards (2019)	Indicator 41, page 6
8	Registered Nurse Practice Standards (2019)	Indicator 49, page 7
9	Registered Nurse Practice Standards (2019)	Indicator 54, page 7
10	Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics (2017)	B5, page 10
11	Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics (2017)	D6, page 12
12	Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics (2017)	F8, page 16

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