



June 2, 2021

RPN PRESCRIBING INFORMATION

CRPNA EXPANDED SCOPE OF PRACTICE – RPN PRESCRIBING SCHEDULE 1 DRUGS (except controlled substances) and ORDERING DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

Prescribing is an expansion of a Registered Psychiatric Nurses scope of practice, beyond the skills, competence, and knowledge an individual practitioner possesses at the point of registration. The change in scope of practice recognizes the existing competencies and entry-level education of the psychiatric nursing profession and provides authority to Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) with additional education and advanced competencies to prescribe schedule 1 drugs (except controlled substances) and order diagnostic tests.

The College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta (CRPNA) asserts that patient safety needs to be the first responsibility and foremost concern of all RPNs. This expansion to the scope of practice of Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) facilitates a more consistent approach to care in settings where RPNs and RNs work side by side and may be authorized to prescribe schedule 1 drugs and order diagnostic tests.

CRPNA requires RPNs to demonstrate that they have the appropriate knowledge, skills, judgment and the approved additional education to be able to prescribe schedule 1 drugs (except controlled substances) and order diagnostic tests.

RPNs can only be authorized to prescribe within a specific practice setting and location. If RPNs move practice settings or locations, their authorization will no longer be valid, and they will be required to re-apply for authorization in the new practice setting.

Before applying for authorization to prescribe schedule 1 drugs, RPNs must first:

- hold an active permit and be in good standing with CRPNA
- have at least 3,000 clinical practice hours as an RPN
- have at least 750 practice hours in the practice setting/location in which they are seeking authorization to prescribe
- complete the Athabasca University RPN Prescribing Course
- have employer support including an employer reference, employer policies, clinical support tools, and collaborative practice relationships in the workplace

The CRPNA has worked with Athabasca University to develop the **RPN Prescribing Course** which consists of two modules. The two modules that comprise the RPN Prescribing course can be taken concurrently or sequentially:

- **RPN Prescribing Module 1:** Competencies, Requirements and Standards (13 week online self-paced)
Module 1 of the RPN Prescribing course is self-paced and self-study, consisting of five units offered over 13 weeks. It addresses legal, ethical and regulatory competencies, as well as those related to client safety and professional practice responsibilities.
- **RN/RPN Prescribing Module 2:** Knowledge-based Practice - Prescribing Medications and Ordering Diagnostic Tests (13-week online paced)
Module 2 of the RN/RPN Prescribing course comprises 10 units offered over 13 weeks in an online, paced format. The module addresses knowledge-based competencies for prescribing, including pharmacologic principles, pathophysiology, client assessment, pharmacotherapeutics, side effects and contraindications, diagnostic testing and interpretation, consultation, follow-up, and referral.

The RPN Prescribing online course was developed primarily for nurses who work in jurisdictions where RN and/or RPN prescribing may be approved. This course may also be of interest and utility to registered psychiatric nurses in other areas who wish to learn more about prescribing and ordering diagnostic tests.

It is important to note that RPN prescribing is not for every RPN in every practice setting. In order for an RPN to be authorized for prescribing schedule 1 drugs and ordering diagnostic tests they will require employer approval and support, clinical support tools to be in place, a relationship with an existing authorized prescriber, completed the RPN prescribing course, have a CRPNA issued unique Prescriber Identified Number and a Practitioner Identification number from Alberta Health. The RPN must also have worked for more than 3000 clinical practice hours of which 750 of those hours must be in the setting where prescribing and ordering will take place.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS for RPN Prescribing

Draft Standards of Practice for RPN Prescribing Schedule 1 Drugs and Ordering Diagnostic Tests

Draft Competencies for RPN Prescribing Schedule 1 Drugs and Ordering Diagnostic Tests

Draft Guidelines for RPN Prescribing Schedule 1 Drugs and Ordering Diagnostic Tests

Draft Standards of Practice for RPNs in the Provision of Restricted Activities