



Ask a Practice Consultant...

Prescribing Standards for RN(EP)s

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QUESTION 1

An RN(EP) has recently joined our team. As an RN, can I administer medications that have been ordered by the RN(EP)?

Answer 1

Yes. Members on the RN(EP) register have the competence and authority to prescribe a wide range of medications. An RN(EP) is a practitioner with prescriptive authority, and an RN should consider these prescriptions and other directions for therapy with the same critical thinking stance you would apply if the plan was initiated by a physician.

QUESTION 2

I am an RN(EP) and work with clients in an acute care facility. I am having some difficulty implementing the Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses on the RN(EP) Register, specifically Standard II Prescribing Drugs. Some of the indicators are awkward or impossible to accommodate on the "Physicians Order Sheet" or don't seem to "fit" acute care practice. How can I meet the Standards in this work setting?

Answer 2

Standard II: Prescribing Drugs states RN(EP)s prescribe drugs relevant to the nurse's area of practice and client population served in accordance with the Extended Practice Regulation, all other relevant provincial and federal legislation, the Competencies for the Registered Nurse (Extended Practice) RN(EP) Register and recognized best practices.

A few of the indicators for Standard II are interpreted differently for hospital, as opposed to community practice. In hospitals an "order sheet" is generally used for in-patient care, rather than a prescription pad. The patient identification information (indicator 8b) is stamped at the top of the order sheet, as opposed to being written in for a community prescription. RN(EP)s do not have to include their telephone number, fax number (indicator 8g) on the hospital order sheet, and may not use prescription pads at all (indicator 13). In addition, prescriptions for in-patients are generally managed through a single pharmacy service, rather than the patient taking the prescription to the pharmacy of their choice. Hospital pharmacists have access to in-patient information. RN(EP)s working in acute care are expected to ensure they meet 8(h) by ensuring their progress notes clearly reflect the indica-

tion for the prescription and the assessment underlying the prescribing decision.

While it is essential that a community prescription includes the duration of the prescription (indicator 8d - quantity; and 8f - duration) this issue is managed differently in acute care, with the RN(EP) being responsible to review prescribed medications on a frequency appropriate to the patient situation and facility policy. RN(EP)s working in acute care are still expected to prescribe within their area of practice and client population, to indicate the name, strength, dose, route, and frequency of the medication, to educate patients, to prescribe based on direct contact with the patient, to monitor the client's response and to avoid prescribing for self or family members.

QUESTION 3

As an Extended Practice Registered Nurse I am finding that the list of drugs referred to in Schedule B of the Extended Practice Regulation does not meet the needs of my practice. Do I have to arrange a delegation from a physician in order to prescribe other drugs?

Answer 3

The Extended Practice Regulation anticipated that the list referred to in Schedule B would not necessarily meet all of the prescribing needs of RN(EP)s. At this time federal legislation prohibits an RN(EP) from prescribing drugs covered by the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The Extended Practice Regulation provides authority to add to the list of drugs the RN(EP) can prescribe in order to meet patient needs:

"Sec 6(1) (b) prescribe drugs or device other than those referred to in Schedule B, if the nurse is an employee of a regional health authority or health care facility who is permitted to do so by a written policy of the authority or facility."

You can work with your employer to develop policy to enable you to prescribe specific additional drugs, or may chose to pursue the option of getting approval from your employer to prescribe, within the parameters of your practice and patient population, from the facility/regional formulary.

Summary

Prescribing expectations for Registered Nurses on the Extended Practice Register are outlined in the Extended Practice Regulation, the Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses on the Extended Practice Register, and Competencies for the Registered Nurse Extended Practice, RN(EP) Register.