

Breaking New Ground for Canada's Clinical Nurse Specialists

In June 2014, *Pan-Canadian Core Competencies for the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)* was launched at the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) biennial meeting, setting the foundation upon which academia could formally build a unified CNS curriculum. This publication would empower CNSs, as recognized advanced practice nurses, to move toward a designated protected title, similar to our nurse practitioner colleagues. In collaboration with and support from CNA, a group of CNS volunteers formed a steering committee in the spring of 2015 to develop an association that will provide a cohesive national strategy to support these goals.

On November 5 and 6, 2015, CNA brought together CNS representatives from across Canada to help build and formalize the structure for a new sustainable, not-for-profit organization that will represent CNSs nationally.

Background: Historically, the CNS role has been interpreted by employers, educators and nurses in a variety of ways. Yet this variation also hindered the understanding and value of who the CNS is and what the CNS does. It was to address this lack of clarity, in fact, that CNA facilitated the development of the pan-Canadian core competencies for the CNS. After its publication in 2014, the challenge then arose as to how to infuse these competencies into all health authorities, educational programs and health-care environments to ensure a common understanding and recognition of CNSs' value.

Work to date: After two days of discussion and a sharing of its goals and vision, the CNS steering committee chose a name and finalized the mission for this emerging national CNS association. The name of the association is not yet confirmed, as a legal name search must still be completed.

Mission: The national CNS association provides a leadership platform through which Canadian CNSs influence cost-effective health-care system change to support safe, quality care and superior outcomes.

Vision: The CNS is an essential component of a sustainable health-care system. The vision was developed with the goal that Canadians will understand the importance of the CNS in the improvement of safety and health outcomes.

Governance: To prepare for the establishment of this new not-for-profit organization, the steering committee learned about the *Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act* and the articles of incorporation necessary to ensure that legal and financial implications are within the general framework required by law. As part of this conversation, the committee established membership criteria and drafted the organization's bylaws and constitution.

Next steps: The CNS steering committee is now working on securing the name of the association, investigating a location for a central office, developing a draft budget, developing an operational policy and establishing financial safeguards, including establishing bank accounts. Upcoming activities include submitting a grant application to CNA for startup funds and an application to CNA's Canadian Network of Nursing Specialties to be considered an emerging group. In order to adequately represent the vast country and territories, we are planning to establish regional representation on the board. The regions will be aligned as follows: Atlantic Region, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba/Saskatchewan/Nunavut, Alberta/N.W.T., and B.C./Yukon. Additionally, a communication strategy that includes the creation of a website and various social media channels are future goals.

How can you help? Please distribute this information to all your CNS networks. We would like to create a groundswell of interest. Then watch for updates in *Canadian Nurse* and from your representatives. We will also be looking for income sources to support this association. If you have ideas, connections or experience that will help launch the association, please share with your CNS provincial representative(s). The collective experience and knowledge of Canadian CNSs will make this association vibrant and successful. We need to partner with educators, employers and established CNS groups.

Please plan to become a member once the new association has launched.

Stay tuned and in touch with your current national CNS steering committee representative:

B.C. and Yukon: Marcia Carr (marcia.carr@fraserhealth.ca)

Alberta and N.W.T.: Heather Richardson (heather.richardson@ahs.ca)
Tanya Spence (tanya.spence@ahs.ca)

Manitoba/Saskatchewan/Nunavut:

Asha Pereira (apereira@hsc.mb.ca)
Tamara Wells (twells2@wrha.mb.ca)

Ontario: Paul-André Gauthier (paul_andre_gauthier@hotmail.com)
Elsabeth Jensen (ejensen@yorku.ca)

Québec: please contact Paul-André Gauthier (Ontario) or Julie Aubé Pinet (New Brunswick)

Atlantic Region:

New Brunswick

Jacquelin Gordon (jacquelin.gordon@horizonnb.ca)
Julie Aubé Pinet (julie.aube-pinet@vitalitenb.ca)

Nova Scotia

Lisa Cicchelli (lisa.cicchelli@iwk.nshealth.ca)
Angela Arra-Robar (angela/arra-robar@iwk.nshealth.ca)

Newfoundland/Labrador

Debbie Squires (debbie.squires@easternhealth.ca)

CNS council chair for CAAPN:

Josephine Muxlow (josephine.muxlow@hc-sc.gc.ca)

Canadian Nurses Association:

Josette Roussel (jroussel@cna-aiic.ca)