



The Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) is the regulatory body for licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs), registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in Nova Scotia. Our mandate is to protect the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing services by its registrants. The term nurse in this document refers to LPNs, RNs, RPNs and NPs unless otherwise stated.

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Our practice support tools are developed using current reference material. The source of this material is available upon request.



On July 2, 2024, the [Electronic Health Records Regulations](#) (the “Regulations”) under the [Personal Health Information Act](#) came into effect, enabling patients’ personal health information collected from their primary care visits to be added to a central electronic health record, accessible through the YourHealthNS app. At this time, the Regulations impact custodians of personal health information in primary care settings such as physicians, nurse practitioners, and pharmacies operating primary care clinics.

Who is considered a custodian?

Custodian is defined in section 3(f)(i) of the *Personal Health Information Act* as an individual or organization who has custody or control of personal health information as a result of or in connection with performing the person’s or organization’s powers or duties. This definition includes nurses who operate a group practice of regulated health professionals but excludes nurses who are considered employees of an organization.

How will the Regulations impact my practice?

Only nurse practitioners operating a group practice of regulated health professionals in a primary care clinic outside of Nova Scotia Health will be impacted by these Regulations. Under the Regulations you will be required to release primary care information to the Minister of Health and Wellness. The Regulations give authority to the Minister of Health to incorporate personal health information from multiple electronic information systems into a centralized electronic health record for the purpose of creating and maintaining an electronic health record, the YourHealthNS app.

Are the Regulations in conflict with my standards of practice?

No, the Regulations are not in conflict with your standards of practice. Standard 1.9 in the [Nurse Practitioner Standards of Practice](#) states nurse practitioners maintain, store and transfer personal health information and client health records according to federal and provincial legislation, regulations and organizational policies. Releasing primary care information to the Minister of Health and Wellness when requested is a legislative and practice standard requirement.

What should I consider when disclosing health information?

In our [Confidentiality and Privacy of Personal Health Information Practice Guideline](#), we address what a nurse needs to consider when disclosing health information based on a legal requirement. When disclosing personal health information in accordance with the Regulations, you should ensure you are disclosing the information to the appropriate authority consistent with the procedure maintained by the Minister of Health and Wellness. You may want to consider discussing this type of disclosure with a legal consultant or privacy officer to ensure proper process/policy is adhered to. You can access legal advice from the [Canadian Nurses Protective Society](#).

How can I learn more about the Regulations and YourHealthNS?

The news release on the Government of Nova Scotia’s changes to electronic health records can be found [here](#). Click [here](#) for more information about YourHealthNS from the Government of Nova Scotia, including the type of information clients will be able to access. If you have any questions, please reach out to an NSCN Practice Consultant at practice@nscn.ca.