



Oncology Nursing Practice Continuum

Tables adapted from College of Nurses of Ontario – *RN and RPN Practice: The Client, the Nurse, and the Environment (2011)*

Nursing Scope of Practice Statement: *The practice of nursing is the promotion of health and the assessment of, the provision of, care for, and the treatment of, health conditions by supportive, preventive, therapeutic, palliative and rehabilitative means in order to attain or maintain optimal function (Nursing Act, 1991).*

EDUCATION

Registered Practical Nurse (RPN)	Registered Nurse (RN)	Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)	Nurse Practitioner (NP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2-3 year diploma in Practical Nursing from an approved College of Applied Arts and Technology - RPNs are nurses in the “general class” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4-year University Bachelor’s degree in Nursing - RNs are nurses in the “general class” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graduate education: Master’s of Nursing or Doctoral prepared, and expertise in a clinical specialty - CNSs are RNs in the “general class” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graduate education: Master’s of Nursing or Doctoral prepared - Successful completion of an approved post-Master’s NP specialty certificate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nurse Practitioner-Adult (NP-Adult) - Nurse Practitioner-Pediatrics (NP-Pediatrics) - Nurse Practitioner-Primary Health Care (NP-PHC) - NPs are RNs in the Extended Class [RN(EC)]

CLIENT FACTORS

Decisions about nursing resources to match patient needs are influenced by patient complexity, predictability and risk of negative outcomes.

Factor	Autonomous RPN or RN Practice	RN Involved or Providing Care	CNS Involved or Providing Care	NP Involved or Providing Care
Complexity (including bio-psycho-social, cultural, emotional and health learning needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - care needs well-defined and established - coping mechanisms and support systems in place and effective - health condition well-controlled or managed - little fluctuation in health condition over time - few factors influencing the client's health - client is an individual, family, group or community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - care needs not well-defined/ established or changing - coping mechanisms and supports unknown, not functioning or not in place - health condition not well-controlled or managed - requires close, frequent monitoring and reassessment - fluctuating health condition - many factors influencing the client's health - client is an individual, family, group, community or population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - care needs may be established, not well-defined or changing - coping mechanisms and supports unknown, not functioning, not in place or may require more intense support - health condition would benefit from non-pharmacologic interventions or pharmacologic interventions in collaboration with physician - multiple factors influencing the client's health including client, treatment or psychosocial complexities - client is an individual, family, group, community or population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - care needs may be undiagnosed in need of diagnostic tests, established, changing or undefined/unknown - coping mechanisms and supports unknown, not functioning, not in place or may require more intense support - health condition would benefit from pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions - multiple factors influencing the client's health including client, co-morbidities, treatment or psychosocial complexities - client is an individual, family, group, community or population

Factor	Autonomous RPN or RN Practice	RN Involved or Providing Care	CNS Involved or Providing Care	NP Involved or Providing Care
Predictability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - predictable outcomes - predictable changes in health condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unpredictable outcomes - unpredictable changes in health condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unpredictable outcomes - unpredictable changes in health condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unpredictable outcomes - unpredictable changes in health or medical condition
Risk of negative outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - predictable, localized and manageable responses - signs and symptoms are obvious - low risk of negative outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unpredictable, systemic or wide-ranging responses - signs and symptoms subtle and difficult to detect - high risk of negative outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unpredictable, systemic or wide-ranging responses - signs and symptoms subtle and difficult to detect - high risk of negative outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unpredictable, systemic multi-organ or wide-ranging responses - signs and symptoms may be multi-system, more frequent, more severe, subtle and difficult to detect - highest risk of negative outcomes

NURSE FACTORS

The factors that affect a nurse's ability to provide safe and ethical care to a given client include leadership, decision-making and critical-thinking skills. Other factors include the application of knowledge, knowing when and how to apply knowledge, and having the resources available to consult as needed.

Factor	RPN	RN	CNS	NP
Client	- Individuals, families and groups and communities	- Individuals, families and groups, communities, and populations	- Individuals, families and groups, communities, and populations	- Individuals, families and groups, communities, and populations
Direct practice assessment	- recognizes changes, probes further and manages or consults appropriately with RN or other health care team member	- anticipates and recognizes subtle changes, probes to assess further, identifies relevant factors, understands significance and manages appropriately	- anticipates and recognizes subtle changes, risks and complications, completes advanced comprehensive, or focused health assessment as appropriate for the client's situation - considers assessments conducted by other health care professionals as appropriate	- anticipates and recognizes subtle changes, risks and complications, completes advanced comprehensive, or focused health and medical assessment as appropriate for the client's situation - considers assessments conducted by other health care professionals as appropriate

Factor	RPN	RN	CNS	NP
Direct practice decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transfers knowledge from similar situations through pattern recognition - makes decisions based on the analysis of available information - makes decisions by accessing a known range of options to solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analyzes and synthesizes a wide range of information using a variety of frameworks or theories - makes decisions after actively seeking information and drawing on a comprehensive range of options to interpret, analyze and solve problems - anticipates many possibilities and makes proactive decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analyzes and synthesizes a wide range of information using a variety of frameworks or theories - reviews and analyzes test results and reports made by other health care professionals while investigating a patient's health problems - makes decisions after actively seeking information and drawing on a comprehensive range of options to interpret, analyze and solve problems - anticipates many possibilities and makes proactive decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - determines and communicates a diagnosis or change in condition - orders and interprets test results and reports made by other health care professionals while considering differential diagnoses - analyzes and synthesizes a wide range of information using a variety of frameworks or theories - makes decisions after actively seeking information and drawing on a comprehensive range of options to interpret, analyze and solve problems - anticipates many predictable and unpredictable possibilities and makes proactive decisions

Factor	RPN	RN	CNS	NP
Direct practice planning	- develops plans of care to achieve identified client goals when overall care needs are less complex, outcomes are predictable and risk of negative outcomes is low	- plans broadly and over a longer time period, incorporating a variety of options and resources	- develops evidence-based treatment plans and next steps based on relevant clinical information, expected and unexpected outcomes, prognosis, and a variety of resources	- develops evidence-based treatment plans and next steps based on relevant medical and clinical information, expected and unexpected outcomes, prognosis, and a variety of resources
Direct practice care coordination	- coordinates care for less-complex clients	- coordinates care for complex clients	- coordinates care for more-complex clients through case management to ensure better access to supportive care and to advocate for health and social services that best meet patient/family needs	- coordinates care for most-complex clients where client or medical factors and treatment with most high-risk potential for harm are combined

Factor	RPN	RN	CNS	NP
Direct practice implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meets identified nursing care needs of less-complex clients with predictable outcomes, including health teaching - meets current identified client care needs using a systematic framework for providing care (e.g., nursing process or theory) - selects from a known range of options - performs nursing interventions for which they can manage the client during and after the intervention or has access to resources - works in consultation with RNs and others to meet care needs of more-complex clients - provides elements of care for highly-complex clients when in close consultation with the RN directing that client's care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meets a wide range of nursing care needs of clients regardless of complexity and predictability, including health teaching - meets immediate and anticipated long-term client needs, drawing from a comprehensive assessment and range of options - selects from a wide range of options - manages multiple nursing interventions simultaneously in rapidly changing situations - directs plans of care for highly complex clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meets a wide range of nursing care needs of clients regardless of complexity and predictability - provides non-pharmacologic interventions and patient education - meets immediate and anticipated long-term client needs, drawing from a comprehensive assessment and range of options - selects from a wide range of options - manages multiple nursing interventions simultaneously in rapidly changing situations - directs plans of care for highly complex clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prescribes pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions as required to meet the client's needs - completes/reviews patient's medication history as a contributing factor in differential diagnosis, decision-making and care planning - patient education re: rationale for medication, expected therapeutic effects, potential side effects, contraindications and precautions, as appropriate - manages multiple medical and nursing health problems and interventions simultaneously in rapidly changing situations - monitors the client's response to treatment, and modifies the medical treatment plan as appropriate

Factor	RPN	RN	CNS	NP
Direct practice evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collaborates with client to evaluate overall goal achievement and modifies plans of care for less-complex clients - identifies expected outcomes of specific interventions and modifies plan of care in collaboration with client - recognizes deviations from predicted client response(s) and consults appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collaborates with client to evaluate overall goal achievement and modifies plan of care - identifies and anticipates a multiplicity of outcomes and modifies plan of care in collaboration with client - recognizes, analyzes and interprets deviations from predicted client response(s) - modifies plan of care autonomously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collaborates with client to evaluate overall goal achievement and modifies plan of care - identifies and anticipates a multiplicity of outcomes and modifies plan of care in collaboration with client - recognizes, analyzes and interprets expected and unexpected client response(s) - modifies nursing plan of care autonomously and may recommend modifications to medical plan of care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collaborates with client to evaluate overall goal achievement and modifies medical and nursing plan of care - identifies and anticipates a multiplicity of outcomes and modifies medical and nursing plan of care in collaboration with client - recognizes, analyzes and interprets expected and unexpected client response(s) - modifies medical and nursing plan of care autonomously

Factor	RPN	RN	CNS	NP
Direct practice consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consults with RNs and other health care team members about identified client needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consults with other health care team members about a broad range of client needs - acts as a resource for RPNs to meet client needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifies, establishes, and maintains a consultative network of other health care professionals to meet client needs - consults other health care professionals when they encounter client care needs beyond the CNS scope of practice, or when a client would benefit from the expertise or advice of other health care professionals - acts as a resource for RNs and RPNs and other professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifies, establishes, and maintains a consultative network of other health care professionals to meet client needs - consults other health care professionals and makes referrals when they encounter client care needs beyond the NP scope of practice, or when a client would benefit from the expertise or advice of other health care professionals - acts as a resource for RNs and RPNs and other professionals
Direct practice (other)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - delivers elements of established health programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can design, coordinate and implement health programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - designs, coordinates, implements, and evaluates health programs as a change agent utilizing relevant theories and frameworks - acts as a resource, facilitator, coordinator, role model and advocate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - designs, coordinates, implements, and evaluates health programs as a change agent utilizing relevant theories and frameworks

Factor	RPN	RN	CNS	NP
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - represents nursing and nursing care issues (e.g., participates in committees, working groups, union/regulatory activities) - acts as a preceptor to students and novice nurses - directs unregulated care providers, as appropriate - provides leadership through formal and informal roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can assume role of leader within interprofessional team - provides leadership through formal and informal roles - acts as a preceptor to students and novice nurses - directs unregulated care providers, as appropriate - leads team effort to develop plans of care to achieve identified client goals when overall care requirements are more complex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - large component of role is to advance their specialty and provide clinical leadership as an agent of change in clinical practice and political processes throughout the health-care system - leads innovations and quality improvement initiatives to improve patient, program and system outcomes - key role in reducing the cost of acute healthcare services - helps influence health public policy - assumes role of leader within interprofessional team - educates nurses, students and other healthcare providers on the use of evidence-based practice - acts as a preceptor to students, nurses and novice CNSs - directs unregulated care providers, RPNs and RNs as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some component of role is to advance their specialty and provide clinical leadership as an agent of change in their practice - leads some quality improvement initiatives - key role in reducing the cost of acute healthcare services - helps influence health public policy - assumes role of leader within interprofessional team - provides leadership through formal and informal roles - educates nurses, students and other healthcare providers on the use of evidence-based practice - acts as a preceptor to students, nurses and novice NPs - directs and can delegate to unregulated care providers, RPNs and RNs as appropriate - leads team effort to develop

Factor	RPN	RN	CNS	NP
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - leads team effort to develop plans of care to achieve identified client goals when overall care requirements are more complex - responsibilities for organization and system leadership including improving nursing practice, knowledge translation of best practices, and health care delivery improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plans of care to achieve identified client goals when overall care requirements are more complex - some responsibilities for organization and system leadership including improving nursing practice, knowledge translation of best practices, and health care delivery improvements
Resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contributes to appropriate resource utilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can make decisions about and allocates resources at program/unit/organizational-level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - makes decisions about and allocates resources at program/unit/organizational-level based on population health needs and evolving practice and healthcare environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - makes decisions about and allocates resources at program/unit/organizational-level - based on population health needs and evolving practice and healthcare environments

Factor	RPN	RN	CNS	NP
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participates in data collection for research - uses research to inform practice (e.g., practice guidelines) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - critically evaluates theoretical and research-based approaches for application to practice - appraises the value of evidence, incorporates research into practice, develops research questions and participates on research teams - integrates theoretical and research-based approaches to design care and implement change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - large component of role is focused on promoting and implementing evidence-based practice within teams and systems strengthening the link between research and clinical practice - role includes active scholarly and professional development - critically evaluates theoretical and research-based approaches and acts as a change agent to develop research questions and implement evidence-based care - assesses evidence from the literature and research studies, applies evidence to practice, uses an evidence-based practice model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - critically evaluates theoretical and research-based approaches and acts as a change agent to develop research questions and implement evidence-based care - assesses evidence from the literature and research studies, applies evidence to practice, uses an evidence-based practice model - role may include active research scholarly and professional development

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Environmental factors include practice supports, consultation resources and the stability/predictability of the environment. The less available the practice supports and consultation resources are, the greater the need for more in-depth nursing competencies and skills in the areas of clinical practice, decision making, critical thinking, leadership, research utilization and resource management.

Factor	More Stable - RPN	Less Stable - RN	Less Stable-CNS	Less Stable - NP
Practice Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clear and identified procedures, policies, medical directives, protocols, plans of care, care pathways and assessment tools - high proportion of expert nurses or low proportion of novice nurses - high proportion of nurses familiar with the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unclear or unidentified procedures, policies, medical directives, protocols, plans of care, care pathways and assessment tools - low proportion of expert nurses or high proportion of novice nurses and unregulated staff - low proportion of nurses familiar with the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unclear or unidentified procedures, policies, medical directives, protocols, plans of care, care pathways and assessment tools - low proportion of advanced practice nurses or high proportion of novice nurses, RPNs, RNs, and unregulated staff - low proportion of nurses familiar with the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unclear or unidentified procedures, policies, medical directives, protocols, plans of care, care pathways and assessment tools - low proportion of advanced practice nurses or high proportion of novice nurses, RPNs, RNs, and unregulated staff - low proportion of nurses familiar with the environment
Consultation resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - many consultation resources available to manage outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - few consultation resources available to manage outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fewer consultation resources available to manage outcomes - consults with physician and allied health professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fewer consultation resources available to manage outcomes - consults with physician and allied health professionals
Stability and predictability of the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low rate of client turnover - few unpredictable events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high rate of client turnover - some unpredictable events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high rate of client turnover - many unpredictable events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high rate of client turnover - many unpredictable events

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