

NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**Subject: Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy
Continuing Education**

Effective date: April 2011

Approved by:

Jarvis Brown

Review date: March 2012

A/Nursing Policy Advisor

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness is committed to addressing the health human resource requirements for a quality health care system. The Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness supports *Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy, Phase II, April 2007*, and is committed to the implementation of initiatives identified in that document.

Support for a wide range of education opportunities is essential to the development of a strong work force of nursing professionals. To encourage the maintenance and enhancement of nursing competencies and educational programs that support professional nursing practice¹, the Department will support ongoing staff development of Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses through Continuing Education opportunities.

II. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Continuing Education: Learning activities for Registered Nurses (RNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) designed to maintain and enhance knowledge, skills and competencies.
- 2.2 Additional Costs: Additional costs incurred by RNs and LPNs involved in learning activities, including the costs of travel and salary replacement.

III. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- 3.1 maintain and enhance individual nursing competencies
- 3.2 support ongoing education and training in support of nurses' commitment to lifelong learning in evolving practice environments
- 3.3 support quality practice environments
- 3.4 support the recruitment and retention of nurses in Nova Scotia with consideration given to the unique needs of rural nurses

IV. APPLICATION

This policy applies to:

- 4.1 Eligible employees including RNs and LPNs who hold an active practicing class license
- 4.2 Eligible employers including District Health Authorities (DHAs); IWK Health Centre; VON; and Long Term Care facilities that are funded by the Department of Health and Wellness

¹ For the purpose of this policy, domains of nursing practice are direct care, education, administration and research.

V. POLICY DIRECTIVES

5.1 Employer Responsibilities

- 5.1.1 The employer will be responsible for managing Continuing Education funds and for promoting/ensuring nurses are made aware of the process for accessing the funds.
- 5.1.2 Employers are responsible for allocating continuing education funds to meet the educational needs of both entry-level and experienced nurses in Nova Scotia with consideration given to the unique needs of rural nurses.
- 5.1.3 The employer will be responsible for completing a quarterly report (Appendix I) and appending it to an invoice for billing the Department of Health and Wellness for eligible and appropriate costs. Reimbursement will be to the approved funding limit established for each employer at the start of the fiscal year. Reports will be due July 31, October 31, January 31, and March 31. Reports will include:
 - Name of facility
 - Education category:
 - Certification & Competency Courses/Skills Labs
 - Conferences/Seminars/Workshops
 - University Course (Nursing only)
 - Media/Books/DVDs
 - Other
 - Details including topic (or name) of education/training program
 - Number attending and position type (RN, LPN)
 - Costs per person including registration, travel, salary replacement, and other
 - Total costs

5.2 Nursing Policy Advisor Responsibilities

- 5.2.1 The Nursing Policy Advisor will be responsible for determining an annual approved spending limit for each employer and for communicating this limit to employers in writing at the start of the fiscal year.
- 5.2.2 The Nursing Policy Advisor will be responsible for the review of quarterly reports and timely reimbursement of employers' continuing education costs to a maximum of the total funding available for each employer, as per 5.2.1.
- 5.2.3 The Nursing Policy Advisor will be responsible for the collation of information provided by employers through the quarterly reporting process and for the development of an Annual Report based on that information.
- 5.2.4 The Nursing Policy Advisor will be responsible for analyzing the information provided for trends and issues.

VI. POLICY GUIDELINES

- 6.1 Learning activities may be competency based and job specific or they may be directed to the individual nurse's professional goals for career enhancement in nursing practice.
- 6.2 The employer may choose to develop a framework for determination of broad-based learning needs, application process for employees, eligibility, and approval criteria.
- 6.3 The Nursing Policy Advisor will participate in the Department of Health and Wellness Business Planning process and make recommendations for Departmental contribution to Continuing Education. Recommendations will be based on a yearly review of program results and priorities within the Nursing Strategy.

VII. ACCOUNTABILITIES

- 7.1 The Nursing Policy Advisor is responsible for determining the funding methodology on a yearly basis in accordance with up-to-date health human resource requirements and other relevant documentation.
- 7.2 Employers are responsible for ensuring equitable access to continuing education funds for RNs and LPNs.

VIII. MONITORING

- 8.1 Participating employers are responsible for monitoring Continuing Education funds.
- 8.2 The Nursing Policy Advisor is responsible for monitoring policy implementation.
- 8.3 The Nursing Policy Advisor is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the program on workforce development.

IX. ENQUIRIES

All enquiries relating to the interpretation and application of this policy should be referred to:

Nursing Policy Advisor	Phone: 424-0122
Department of Health and Wellness	Fax: 424-6690
P.O. Box 488	E-mail: NursingStrategy@gov.ns.ca
Halifax, NS B3J 2R8	

X. APPENDICES

- Appendix I Nursing Strategy-Continuing Education-Employer Report, Summary and Detail pages

Nursing Strategy-Continuing Education-Employer Report **SUMMARY PAGE**

For the period: *Please mark reporting period with an X.*

April-June () July-September () October-December () January-March () Year _____

Employer (DHA/Facility): _____

Amount claimed: _____ *Please ensure this amount does not exceed annual allocation.*

Employer verification: I certify that the amounts in this claim meet the terms and conditions as outlined in the DHW Policy *Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy Continuing Education.*

Name (please print): _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

E-mail address: _____

FOR INFORMATION:

Please complete the Employer Report – Detail Page to provide details of the Continuing Education funds spent this period, completing as many pages as needed. Guidelines for completing the form are as follows:

COLUMN HEADING	INFORMATION REQUIRED
Education Category	Indicate what category the item falls under by entering the corresponding number in this column: 1=Certification & Competency Courses/Skills Labs 2=Conferences/Seminars/Workshops 3=University Course (Nursing only) 4=Media/Books/DVDs 5=Other <i>*If using the Excel spreadsheet provided, these categories appear in a drop-down list.</i>
Details	Provide information about the item in this column; for example, conference title, type of competency course, details for "other" category.
Number of Nurses	Indicate the number of RNs and LPNs included in the training, if applicable.
Costs	
• Registration	Enter the total registration costs for this item.
• Travel	Enter the total travel costs for this item (mileage/accommodations/etc.).
• Salary Replacement	Enter the total costs for replacing staff associated with this item.
• Other	Enter any other costs associated with this item.
• Details for Other	Provide the details of "other" costs.
Total Costs	Enter the sum of the costs provided for registration, travel, salary replacement, and other. At the bottom of this column please enter the total costs for the page where indicated. <i>*If using the Excel spreadsheet provided, the totals will calculate automatically.</i>

Please send the completed report (summary and detail pages), along with an invoice, to:

NURSING POLICY ADVISOR
Department of Health and Wellness
PO Box 488
Halifax, NS B3J 2R8
Fax: (902) 424-6690

Nursing Strategy-Continuing Education-Employer Report

EDUCATION CATEGORY	DETAILS	NUMBER OF NURSES		COSTS					TOTAL COSTS
		RN	LPN	Registration	Travel	Salary Replacement	Other	Details for Other	
									TOTAL COSTS THIS PAGE: