

Nova Scotia Department of Health

Subject: Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy
Continuing Education

Effective date: April 2007
Review date: March 2009

Approved by: *Original signed by Donna Denney*
Nursing Policy Advisor

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Nova Scotia Department of Health is committed to addressing the health human resources requirements for a quality health care system. The Nova Scotia Department of Health supports the *Nova Scotia Nursing Strategy, April 2001*, 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 the pursuit of career opportunities within and related to nursing¹, 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 include 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 nurse's 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; Department of Health Home Care Nova Scotia, as well as Long Term Care (LTC)

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

facilities funded by the Department of Health

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 Nursing Strategy CE 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. Whereas Nursing Strategy funding is allocated to employers according to their overall nursing FTEs, employers are responsible for ensuring proportionate allocation of continuing education funds based on the number of nurse FTEs in rural facilities (i.e. facilities other than regional health centers).
- 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 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 within 30 days from the end of each quarter of the fiscal year. Reports will include:
 - Name of facility
 - Type of education/training program (university course, conference, workshop, certification program)
 - Topic (or name) of education/training program
 - Number attending and position type (RN, LPN)
 - Tuition/registration cost per person
 - Additional costs
 - Length of training

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 semi-annual reports and timely reimbursement of employers' continuing education costs to a maximum of the total funding available for each employer, outlined 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 personal and 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 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: 424-5881
Department of Health	Fax: 424-6690
PO Box 488	E-mail: nursingstrategy@gov.ns.ca
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2R8	

X. APPENDICES

Appendix I *Nursing Strategy – Continuing Education - Employer Quarterly Report Form*

