

Supporting Saskatchewan Regulated Health Care Professionals During the COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic is difficult and challenging for our health care system. During a surge in COVID-19 cases, you may be required to adapt your usual practice. You may be asked to work in unfamiliar settings or outside of your typical role for the benefit of patients. You are not expected to practice beyond the professional scope of practice of your profession nor beyond your individual competence. As the province plans its response, your role is vital to patients receiving safe, competent and ethical care.

Principles and expectations for practice:

1. Health care professionals remain accountable to the standards and competencies required by their regulatory and licensing bodies and professional associations.
2. A healthcare professional cannot work beyond their legislated scope of practice.
3. Health care professionals may be required to learn new competencies to fulfill their roles.
4. Health care professionals have the responsibility to self-assess their competencies and determine which activities are within their current or possible competencies (i.e. achievable with review or training) and determine which are outside of a reasonably attainable competency (i.e. insufficient time for competent skill development).
5. Competence does not always equal comfort. It is recognized that as pandemic phases progress the demands on providers may increase and the perception of ability to meet professional requirements will be challenged.
6. Health care professionals are trained to work in many different environments and conditions and have the judgment and professional acumen to make reasonable and prudent decisions related to practice within those environments.
7. There may be different providers working in teams, each of whom is accountable for their own practice. Within the team, collaboration and communication are fundamental to effective team functioning.

As regulated health care professionals, you are expected to always meet (or exceed) practice standards. Practice standards are written broadly. This allows flexibility and provides you with the ability to meet them consistently even if how you meet those standards changes during a pandemic. You are expected to make decisions based on assessment of the patient and situation by using your best judgment to ensure you continue to provide safe, competent and ethical care as any reasonable prudent health professional would.

Expectations when working in an unfamiliar and/or uncertain situation:

- Use knowledge to determine actions required to maintain the safety of the patient, others and yourself
- Be aware of and access supports and resources
- Continue to meet practice standards
- Document care delivery
- Communicate questions and concerns to others and those in leadership roles

If you need more information or wish to talk with someone about a practice situation, please contact your employer, Clinical Standards within the Saskatchewan Health Authority, or your respective regulatory body.

Thank you for your dedication, professionalism and service as we, as a province, respond proactively to the evolving needs.

