

## Q & A for RN Specialty Practices October 2015

The information for this Q & A is taken from the SRNA document, [Standards for RN Specialty Practices \(2015\)](#).

### Timelines for Implementation

- May 4, 2016 SRNA Annual Meeting - Members will vote to incorporate the document by reference into the SRNA Bylaws.
- Throughout 2015 & 2016 - Employer and Member implementation of the document and new processes.

### 1. Why are Special Nursing Procedures (SNP) and the Transfer of Medical Function (TMF) dissolving?

Since 1993, the SRNA document, *The Registered Nurse Scope of Practice: Special Nursing Procedures and Nursing Procedures by Transfer of Medical Functions* has set out the criteria that allow RNs to perform TMF. However, it was identified that *The Medical Professions Act (1981)* did not give the authority for physicians to delegate medical activities to others and the SNP and TMF processes had to end. Recently, *The Medical Professions Act, 1981* and the College of Physician and Surgeons of Saskatchewan bylaws were revised to support physicians delegating specific medical functions to RNs.

### 2. What will replace SNP and TMF?

Many of the activities RNs are performing will be addressed within:

1. RN Specialty Practices;
2. RN with Additional Authorized Practice; and/or
3. Delegation from a physician to a RN.

### 3. What documents will explain the new practices?

1. [Standards for RN Specialty Practices \(2015\)](#);
2. [Standards, Competencies and Clinical Decision Tools for the RN with Additional Authorized Practice \(2013\)](#); and
3. Delegation from a physician to RN - to be developed December 2015.

### 4. What are RN Specialty Practices?

Specialty Practices are skills, treatments and interventions within the RN scope of practice that have specialized competencies which are obtained beyond the entry to practice RN

education program. The broad scope of RN practice allows for a diversity of specialty practices that range from those which are straightforward to implement to others which are highly complex in their knowledge requirement and application. The types of specialty practices RNs can perform will depend on the practice setting, the health care needs of the client and a RN's competencies.

**5. Where do RN Specialty Practices occur?**

They can occur in any area of nursing practice or employment including, but not limited to: acute care, community care, corrections, medical clinics, public health, industry and long term care.

**6. Where does the authority come from for RNs to provide specialty practices?**

RNs receive the authority to perform specialty practices from *The Registered Nurses Act, 1988 (The RN Act)*. Section 2(k) subsection (iv) through (vi) provides the authority for a RN to practice beyond what has generally been defined as the traditional RN scope of practice. See Appendix A, p. 32 in the [Standards for RN Specialty Practices \(2015\)](#).

**7. What are my responsibilities when implementing a RN specialty practice?**

The **standards**, as outlined in the current [SRNA Standards and Foundation Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses](#), serve as the foundation for the general RN practice and specialty practices. A standard is a desired and achievable level of performance against which actual performance can be compared. Standards for the registered nursing profession reflect the philosophical values of the profession, clarify what the registered nursing profession expects of its member and informs the public of acceptable practice of the registered nurse. The standards for RN specialty practices are found on p. 7-9, [Standards for RN Specialty Practices \(2015\)](#).

**8. What are the new processes that will be used for RN Specialty Practices?**

The two processes that guide a specialty practice include the use of either a Procedure or a RN Clinical Protocol. The two processes have unique features and have different responsibilities that a RN must understand. The differences between a RN Clinical Protocol and a Procedure are found on p. 14, [Standards for RN Specialty Practices \(2015\)](#).

**9. What is a Procedure?**

A Procedure is a set of steps or a detailed way of performing a skill or treatment that has a desired outcome (Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2007). Generally, Procedures include skills or treatments that range from being straightforward to moderately complex in their knowledge requirements and application, and will have a lower potential for unintended outcomes. Procedures are performed on clients who have stable to complex care needs. Information on Procedures is found on p. 11-12, [Standards for RN Specialty Practices \(2015\)](#).

**10. What is a RN Clinical Protocol?**

A RN Clinical Protocol outlines a series of registered nursing activities that are implemented in pre-determined situations to provide highly specialized client care. It provides the authority for a RN who has obtained the specialized competencies and proficiency to implement care either:

- **independently without a client-specific order** in an Emergency Health Situation or in an established Health/Service Program; or
- **with a client-specific order** for activities that are categorized as an Advanced RN Intervention.

\*For more information on RN Clinical Protocols, please go to the *Q & A for RN Clinical Protocols* found at [www.srna.org/index.php/component/content/article/17-main-section/259-leading-change-specialty-practices](http://www.srna.org/index.php/component/content/article/17-main-section/259-leading-change-specialty-practices).

**11. Can a RN be a RN with additional authorized practice, implement a specialty practice, and/or obtain physician delegation?**

Yes, depending on the practice setting, the client care needs of the population, and the roles and responsibilities of a RN, he/she may be required to perform all of the new processes. For example, RNs who are licensed to practice as a RN with additional authorized practice working in northern Saskatchewan, where there is limited physician or RN(NP) availability, may be required to carry out all of these processes. RNs and employers who have questions about this can contact a SRNA Practice Advisor at [practiceadvice@srna.org](mailto:practiceadvice@srna.org).

**12. Who do I contact at the SRNA if I have questions about RN Specialty Practices?**

Please contact a SRNA Practice Advisor at [practiceadvice@srna.org](mailto:practiceadvice@srna.org).

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