



FAQ

USE AND MIS-USE OF PROFESSIONAL TITLE

From time-to-time the Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB) receives queries regarding the use of the title registered nurse (RN) and nurse practitioner (NP), as well as the mis-use of these titles. Therefore, this brief document is written to clarify concepts regarding 'use and mis-use' of the professional title nurse or RN or NP.

The titles nurse, RN, and NP are protected titles in New Brunswick.¹ An employed (including self-employed) RN or NP may only use the title nurse, registered nurse, RN, nurse practitioner or NP when engaged in a practice recognized as the practice of nursing by NANB and while holding an active registration with NANB. If *retired* from nursing or on a leave from nursing with a *non-practising status*, this is not considered *active* registration and therefore you can not provide nursing services and cannot use these titles.

Other healthcare professionals who provide nursing services and are valued members of the nursing care delivery team are also expected by their regulatory body, to identify themselves by their protected title. For example, only current, actively licensed members of the Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses can use the title(s) Licensed Practical Nurse or Practical Nurse or the designations LPN or PN.² The importance of identifying oneself by name and designation informs colleagues, clients and the public of who you are and what role you play on the health care team.

The Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses (2017) states: Nurses represent themselves clearly with respect to name, title and role (p.16).³ RNs and NPs may legally offer any service that falls within the practice of nursing and which does not infringe upon the exclusive practice of another health discipline, (for example an RN cannot perform surgery). If a service provided by an RN or NP is not recognized by NANB as nursing practice, the RN or NP cannot use their title in association with that particular service.

With regards to marketing/advertising a business, RNs and NPs must demonstrate ethical decision-making. Responsible advertising is done in a manner that serves the interest of the public and pertains to activities within the RN or NP's nursing practice. Self-employed⁴ RNs and NPs may use the title 'nurse', 'Registered Nurse' or 'RN' / 'Nurse Practitioner' or 'NP' to market nursing services, as this informs the client making choices related to their health care.

RNs and NPs may not use their title to promote a personal interest in a commercial product or service. Endorsement occurs when an RN or NP uses their credentials to lend credibility to a commercial product, product line or a health service. For example, if you are a consultant for a company whose products are claimed to aid in health, to promote the products in conjunction with your trusted authority as an RN or

¹ See 12(1) of the *Nurses Act* <http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-NursesAct-2008-Bilang.pdf>

² https://www.anblpn.ca/resources/Use_of_Protected_Title.pdf

³ http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/Code_of_Ethics-2017-E.pdf

⁴ <http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-GuidelinesSelfEmployedRNs-E.pdf>

NP (via social media, written communication, marketing materials or verbally), is considered misuse of the protected title and a potential breach of NANB Standards and the CNA Code of Ethics.

RNs and NPs with vested interests in a specific product cannot use their title to lead the public to believe they know that one product is better than another even if they believe it to be true. The endorsement of a product or service without providing information about other options could mislead the public and compromise trust. *Nurses maintain appropriate professional boundaries and ensure their relationships are always for the benefit of the person. They recognize the potential vulnerability of persons receiving care and do not exploit their trust and dependency in a way that might compromise the therapeutic relationship. They do not abuse their relationship for personal or financial gain and do not enter into personal relationships (romantic, sexual or other) with persons receiving care.* (CNA, 2017, p.13).³

The RN or NP with an actual or perceived conflict of interest should declare the details of the conflict when discussing health care options with a client. All RNs and NPs must adhere to the *NANB Standards for The Therapeutic Nurse-Client Relationship*⁵ and consider the *Conflict of Interest: Practice Guidelines*.⁶ *Nurses are sensitive to the inherent power differentials between care providers and persons receiving care. They do not misuse that power to influence decision-making.* (CNA, 2017, p. 11).³

If a person uses the title nurse, RN or NP without being registered with NANB, then they are breaching the *Nurses Act*. Likewise, if a person is registered and they mis-use their professional title to endorse a commercial product or service, they too are in contravention of the *Nurses Act*. Breaching the *Nurses Act* may result in an investigation by NANB and could result in a formal complaint being lodged by the Registrar.

**If you have further question about the use or mis-use of title, please contact NANB.*

⁵ <http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-StandardsNurseClientRelation-E-2015-10.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-Guidelines-ConflictInterest-E-2015-10.pdf>