

Professional Responsibility

KISS

(Keep It Simply Succinct)

A practical approach to the initial steps of resolving Professional Responsibility Concerns

It is your professional responsibility to report unsafe patient care/practice concerns to your employer. Examples of such concerns include inadequate or inappropriate staff and/or skill mix for acuity, delay in assessment, non-nursing duties, lack of supplies, and inadequate orientation/mentorship. The tool available to assist is the ONA Professional Responsibility Workload Report Form (PRWRF). Failure to comply with your professional obligation of reporting is considered professional misconduct (see College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) *Reference Document, Legislation and Regulation: Professional Misconduct*, p. 12.) You may choose to report to both the employer and the CNO.

1. When a workload issue occurs, try to resolve the issues within the program/area/unit. If necessary, ask assistance from a team leader, supervisor, coordinator or charge nurse.
2. If the concern is not resolved, notify your manager/designate by voice, e-mail or in person by the next working day.
3. Encourage and support your colleagues to participate in the process. This may include signing the form, discussing the situation and writing possible solutions or recommendations to the problem on the form.
4. Discuss your practice and/or workload concern with the manager or, if you prefer, your Bargaining Unit President, who will present for/with you to the manager. Make sure that section "7" of the form, management comments, is completed. Give the *white* "Manager/Chief Nursing Officer (or designate) Copy" to your manager. (If using electronic forms, e-mail or print for submission).
5. Keep the *green* "Member Copy" for your records or, where using electronic versions, print a copy for yourself.
6. Submit the *white* "LRO Copy" and the *pink* "Local Copy" to your Bargaining Unit President or designated Workload and Professional Responsibility Representative.
7. Discuss the forms with your Bargaining Unit President or your designated Workload and Professional Responsibility Representative. She or he will arrange for a Labour-Management Committee (L-M) meeting to discuss the workload report forms. *
8. Prepare for the L-M meeting with your colleagues and develop solutions to these workload problems.
9. Participate at the L-M meeting if possible, or assign a co-worker to attend.
10. When your workload requires you to work overtime (OT), be sure to complete the PRWRF and file for OT. The request for OT assists in demonstrating that you require additional staff.

Remember the Professional Responsibility Workload Report Form (PRWF) in itself is not a Professional Responsibility Complaint (PRC), but the start of a paper trail to identify and demonstrate ongoing concerns requiring a response by your employer. It provides evidence of your identification of nursing practice, nursing/client care, workload and patient safety issues, and provides you with documentation should you or another member find yourself in the unfortunate position of responding to the Complaints and Disciplines Committee at the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO). The following are some strategies to assist you.

STRATEGIES FOR PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY CONCERNS

- Consider sending a letter to the CNO. A sample letter that could be used and sent to the CNO in regard to professional responsibility concerns is available on the ONA website at www.ona.org/professional_practice.html.

STRATEGIES FOR BARGAINING UNIT EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

- Ensure minutes from Labour-Management Committee meetings are clearly documented and posted on individual units where practice concerns were presented for members to view.
- If the Professional Responsibility concerns are unresolved, the Bargaining Unit executive may forward its concerns to the Chief Nursing Officer, and/or the CEO and/or the Board of Directors at the agency. Prior to this step the Bargaining Unit should consult with its Labour Relations Officer (LRO). The LRO can access a professional practice specialist to assist in resolving your PRC.
- Encourage members to access the CNO Outreach Program and the Outreach Consultants. You can access the Outreach Program through the website at www.cno.org/en/learn-about-standards-guidelines/outreach/.
- If members do not want to contact the CNO directly or anonymously, they may consult with the LRO for direction and assistance.

***Labour-Management Committee may be referred to as Union/Management or Nurse/Management Committee, Agency Association Committee or Hospital Association Committee, etc.**

STRATEGIES FOR ONA MEMBERS

- Visit the ONA website at www.ona.org and click on the tab at the top of the main web page that is titled, "Professional Practice." Here you will find current and frequently updated resources that include tools, tips, nursing research and Professional Practice Teleconnect information.
- Consider an ONA Professional Responsibility Workshop. Contact your Bargaining Unit President or Local Coordinator to assist you with your educational interests. Check the ONA educational and e-learning workshops calendar, also available on the ONA website.
- Utilize resources such as the CNO eLearning module, *the Three Factor Framework* from the CNO website at www.cno.org/en/learn-about-standards-guidelines/educational-tools/learning-modules/utilization-of-rns-and-rpns/.
- Refer to speciality certification requirements, such as from the Canadian Nurses Association website at www.cna-nurses.ca/cna.
- Review best practice guidelines (BPG) such as those from the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) on its website at www.rnao.org/bestpractices/.
- Provide references and material to your manager to support your concerns, i.e. the CNO's *Practice Standards, Practice Guidelines, and Legislation and Regulation*, available from the CNO website at www.cno.org/pubs/compendium.html.
- This may include the CNO's *Professional Standards, 2002 (Rev. 2009); Practice Standards Therapeutic Nurse-Client Relationship, 2006; Ethics, 2009; Reference Documents Legislation and Regulation, Professional Misconduct*
- Become involved and raise professional development concerns in your organization through the ONA representative on the Professional Development Committee.