

# Quick Guides to the Health Professions

## Licensed Practical Nurses

### *What is a licensed practical nurse?*

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) are professional nurses who work within their own scope of practice, standards of practice, and code of ethics. LPNs are one of three categories of professional nurses in Alberta involved in nursing assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation of care.

### *What do licensed practical nurse do?*

LPNs study from the same body of nursing knowledge as registered nurses (RNs) and registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) with a focused approach in foundational knowledge, critical thinking, and clinical judgment. LPNs have the knowledge, skill, and judgment needed for all phases of the continuum of care from prevention to acute treatment and management as well as long term and palliative care. LPNs can have both independent and overlapping roles on the health care team.

### *Where do licensed practical nurse work?*

LPNs contribute to Alberta's health care system through a wide range of practice settings including acute care, long term care, community, primary care clinics, education, occupational health and safety, public health, and leadership.

### *Education and preparation*

In Alberta, LPNs graduate from a two-year diploma in practical nursing. The program provides a minimum of 1650 instructional hours including 750 hours of theoretical instruction and 900 hours of clinical and lab experience.

There are numerous post-basic learning opportunities for LPNs. Specialty education is available in many areas such as immunization, operating room, advanced orthopedics, renal dialysis, and advanced footcare. There are also certificate programs in areas such as mental health, chronic disease management, leadership, gerontology, wound care, and palliative care.

### *Licensure*

As a self-regulating profession, LPNs must comply with registration requirements set out by the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA) under the Health Professions Act, Licensed Practical Nurses Profession Regulation (Alta Reg 81/2003). LPNs receive initial registration upon completion of an approved practical nurse program and must renew their registration annually, demonstrating participation in continuing competence activities, and active engagement in professional practice.

### *Professional organizations*

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA)  
[www.clpna.com](http://www.clpna.com)

### *Contributors to this guide*

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