



## Review of Practice Consultations 2019/2020

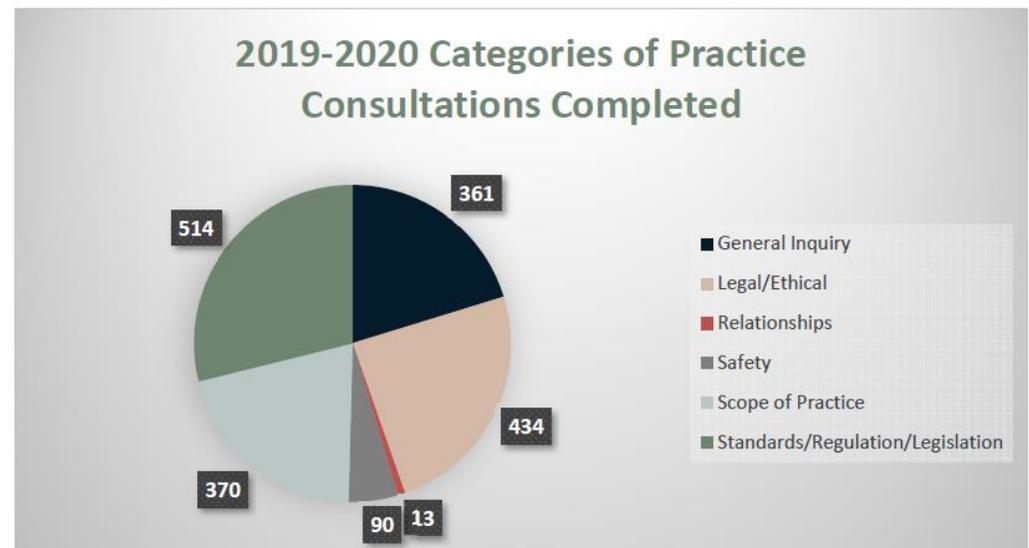
CARNA policy and practice consultants provide confidential consultations to individuals and groups regarding inquiries and issues that may affect the delivery of safe, competent, and ethical nursing care. Registrants of CARNA are the primary users of practice consultation; others include members of the public, employers, other health-care professionals, and government. CARNA recognizes that changes in the health-care system are influenced by rapid changes in technology, and economic, political, and socio-demographic factors. The annual review of practice consultations helps CARNA identify issues that affect nursing practice within this changing environment and provides an opportunity to address issues that affect patient safety and nursing practice.

COVID-19 created unique challenges to CARNA registrants, particularly at the beginning of the public health restrictions being put in place and enforced by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. In anticipation of practice questions that may arise due to the pandemic, the policy and practice consultants expanded their work hours from March 15, 2020 to June 27, 2020 to include weekends and evenings from 8:30 am-8:00pm so that practice consultation was available after hours. This report illustrates an analysis of the COVID-19 calls that were captured. These COVID-19 calls are included in the overall numbers, but a separate analysis of the specific COVID-19 calls was also analyzed to identify themes.

### Standards/Regulation/Legislation

This category had the most consultations and was also the highest category in the review of 2018/2019. There were 514 practice consultations in this area, with 235 fewer consultations in this category compared to 2018-2019 practice year. One of the possibilities for this decline is that the focus on implementing an RN authorized to prescribe is in the process of being operationalized by employers, and the authorization of NPs being able to authorize cannabis for medical use has been addressed.

This category captures inquiries that were answered using the regulatory framework outlined in legislation and the CARNA documents to provide direction and support for nursing practice. The largest number of consultations in this category were about prescribing, with the majority about general RN prescribing questions. Other questions were related to NP prescribing, specifically to their scope of prescribing, prescribing opioid agonist therapy, and authorization of cannabis for medical purposes. Medication management was another theme in this category. The majority of questions were related to medication orders, competencies required to administer a certain medication, or what certification or course was required, for example, to administer immunizations, or aesthetic injections.



## **Legal/Ethical**

This category captured the inquiries rooted in the value and responsibility statements in the code of ethics and/or actual or potential rising legal situations. This was the second largest category at 434 consultations. The top three themes in this category were self-employment, liability, and risk management. The legal/ethical category had an increased number of calls from the previous practice year by 16 calls. The highest theme in this category was related to self-employment. These included general self-employed practice questions which involve directing callers to the self-employed checklists, referrals to the Canadian Nurses Protective Society, discussions about Privacy Impact Assessments (PIA), and referrals to Specialty Practice Groups (SPG). Other questions were about training or education requirements. Liability was the second highest theme in this category, and most questions were requesting information about the type of liability insurance registrants have or what type is needed for self-employed practice. Risk management emerged as a theme, with the majority of questions related to COVID-19, best practice, or professional conduct issues.

## **Scope of Practice**

There were 370 consultations in this category, making this the third largest category. These inquiries related to understanding the knowledge, skill, or education required for particular nursing interventions or activities to ensure practitioner competency to perform them. The majority of questions were regarding determining the scope of practice for RNs and NPs, such as authorizations related to practice and restricted activities, or determining if an RN or NP could perform a restricted activity or a specific intervention. Determining NP scope of practice was the second largest theme. Examples included questions about the overall scope of practice of an NP and questions about NP streams of practice. Other questions included NP roles in different practice settings or situations, capacity assessments completed by an NP, NP completion of a medical certificate of death, and an NP completion of driver's medical examination.

## **COVID-19**

Consultations specific to COVID-19 were monitored to analyze some of the themes that emerged during the pandemic. There were 205 practice consultations specific to COVID-19 inquiries. These COVID-19 calls were included in the overall numbers, but a separate analysis of the specific COVID-19 calls was also analyzed to identify themes. The category with the most calls was the General Inquiries-Other category with consultations including topics such as RNs offering to come out of retirement to work during the pandemic, CPR requirements since classes and recertification courses were cancelled, and clarification of public health restrictions that were put in place. The second largest category was Legal/Ethical-Risk Management. Consultations in this category included questions about best practices, working while they themselves were considered medically 'high risk', telepractice and redeployment. The third largest category in the COVID-19 consultations was the Standards/Regulations/Legislation-Practice Standards for registrants. Themes in this category included best practice, clarification of public health restrictions, and miscellaneous questions, such as wondering about volunteering, NP streams of practice, RN changing scope of practice, and e-signatures.