

# Supervision

Effective: February 2, 2026

## INTRODUCTION

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides of Alberta (CLHA) has the **authority** under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) to carry out its activities and **govern** Health Care Aides (HCAs)\* in a manner that protects and serves the public interest.

Part of carrying out this mandate is creating expectations in various areas of HCA practice, such as supervision, to ensure the delivery of client care is safe, **competent**, and ethical.

Terms found in the definitions section are **bolded** where they appear for the first time in this document.

## PURPOSE

This policy outlines the expectations and **requirements** for an HCA on the **general register** and **courtesy register** when supervising others in performing authorized **activities of daily living** (ADLs).

## POLICY

To work as an HCA in Alberta, HCAs need to be registered with the CLHA under one of the registration categories described in the *Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aide Profession Regulation*. The supervision responsibilities and requirements of an HCA will differ depending on the registration category they fall under. For example, while HCAs on the general and courtesy registers are authorized to provide supervision according to this policy, HCAs on the **provisional register** and **transitional register** are not.

### Authorization for Supervision

Under Section 3(2) of Schedule 10 of the HPA, HCAs are authorized to “teach Health Care Aide techniques and practices to **practitioners** in the workplace.” HCAs may therefore supervise the individuals and groups listed below, provided they are authorized and competent to do so. The HCA should also ensure that the task<sup>†</sup> they are performing is considered part of the HCA role in that setting, and they are authorized to supervise that activity by their employer. In

\* In this document, “Health Care Aides (HCAs)” refer to LPNs and has the same meaning as “regulated member(s)” in the *Health Professions Act*.

† In this document, the word task may refer to an ADL or other activities performed by other healthcare providers.

addition to this policy, the HCA must also follow the *Code of Ethics for Health Care Aides in Alberta*, HCA standards of practice, and other applicable **regulatory** and employer requirements. Except when performing a **restricted activity** and other exempted tasks, HCAs on the general and courtesy registers may supervise:

- an HCA student in an approved HCA program;
- a student of another health profession in an approved health service program of studies other than the HCA program;
- an **unregulated healthcare provider**, such as comfort care aides, dietary aides, etc.; and
- another HCA, including HCAs on the provisional and transitional registers.

### ***Supervising Authorized Tasks***

HCAs on the general and courtesy registers may supervise the individuals outlined above, provided that:

- the task is an ADL that they are authorized to perform and supervise according to regulatory and employer requirements;
- the HCA has the knowledge, skill, judgment, and **competence** to supervise that task; and
- the HCA observes, reports, and documents according to regulatory and employment requirements.

Please note that HCAs must not supervise an activity that they themselves require supervision to perform such as:

- the restricted activities outlined in the *Standards of Practice for Health Care Aides on Restricted Activities and Supervision Requirements*;
- activities of daily living for a client that would otherwise be considered a restricted activity, as explained in the *HCA Activities of Daily Living Guideline*; and
- medication assistance as described in the *Medication Assistance* policy.

### **Supervision**

In this document, supervision refers to the support that an HCA provides to another person to perform specific tasks. This support can be through guidance, consultation, and assistance. Different tasks may require different types of supervision, which are listed below.

- Direct supervision: the supervising HCA is present beside the individual receiving supervision while the task is performed.
  - For example, in direct supervision, the supervising HCA is present with the individual being supervised to safely perform a lift transfer from the bed to the wheelchair.
- Indirect supervision: the supervising HCA is on-site, ready to provide guidance, consultation, and assistance, but is not directly beside the individual receiving supervision.

- For example, in indirect supervision, if a student is walking by a client's room and discovers a client in an unsafe sleeping position, the student can contact the supervising HCA to help them. The supervising HCA can join the student to provide the necessary support for repositioning as per the client's **care plan**.
- Remote supervision: the supervising HCA is not on-site but can be easily contacted for guidance, consultation, and assistance via technology (such as by phone).
  - For example, in remote supervision, the supervising HCA can provide direction by phone to guide a provisional HCA on how to redirect a client with dementia if there is no other authorized health professional to provide that support.

### **Factors in Determining Supervision**

The HCA and the individual to be supervised may discuss and determine what type of supervision (direct, indirect or remote) is needed and seek guidance from an appropriate health professional if unsure. The type of supervision the HCA will provide depends on factors such as the:

- HCA's authorization and ability to provide the needed supervision,
- client's care plan,
- care setting,
- **acuity** of the client,
- client's condition and if it is changing,
- **predictability** of the **outcome** of the task, and
- competence level of the individual receiving supervision.

### **General Guidelines for HCAs Providing Supervision**

An HCA must possess and apply the necessary knowledge, training, skills, and judgment to supervise another person while following the relevant legislation, regulations, and employer requirements. A supervising HCA must also:

- only supervise ADLs authorized in the client care plan;
- only supervise ADLs that are not high-risk;
- only supervise a task that they themselves can perform without supervision;
- only supervise ADLs that they are competent to perform;
- consent to supervise the individual and be **accountable** for the task being performed;
- discuss with the individual to be supervised to determine the appropriate type of supervision required;
- perform supervision following employer requirements;
- provide assistance, consultation, and guidance, as required, to the individual being supervised. For example, answering questions, providing support, and giving clear feedback;
- document the care and supervision they provided according to the *Documentation* policy and any employer requirements; and

- review the documentation of the person being supervised to ensure accuracy and completeness.

The HCA should consult the health professional who assigned the supervision for necessary information and should not reassign the task without prior discussion with the assigning health professional.

### **HCA Students**

A supervising HCA ensures the safe, competent, and ethical delivery of ADLs to clients by supervising an HCA student enrolled in an approved HCA program. A supervising HCA must:

- ensure that the HCA student has received the education and training prior to performing the task;
- ensure that the HCA student has been approved by their program or instructor to perform the task;
- ensure that the client's care plan is followed;
- provide a minimum of indirect supervision except in circumstances where the post-secondary institution and employer requirements permit remote supervision;
- report any issues or concerns regarding the task to the regulated health professional **responsible** for the client's care;
- **collaborate** with the clinical instructor or mentor to address and manage any competence issues related to the student's performance of the task; and
- address and provide guidance for any competence issues. If unsure, contact the health professional who assigned the task.

### **Students of Another Health Profession**

An HCA ensures the safe, competent, and ethical delivery of ADLs to clients by supervising a student of another health profession in an approved health services program, other than the HCA program, such as nursing students. A supervising HCA must:

- ensure that the student has received the education and training before performing the task;
- ensure that the student has been authorized and assigned by their program or instructor to perform the task;
- ensure that the client's care plan is being followed;
- provide a minimum of indirect supervision except in circumstances where the post-secondary institution and employer requirements permit remote supervision;
- report any issues or concerns regarding the task to the regulated health professional responsible for the client's care;
- collaborate with the clinical instructor to address and manage any competence issues related to the student's performance of the task; and

- address and provide guidance for any competence issues. If unsure, contact the health professional who assigned the task.

## **Supervision of an Unregulated Healthcare Provider**

An unregulated healthcare provider does not have a legally defined scope of practice and must work under the direct or indirect supervision of a regulated health professional.

An HCA ensures the safe, competent, and ethical delivery of care to clients by supervising an unregulated health provider. A supervising HCA must:

- ensure that the health provider has received the education and training prior to performing the task;
- ensure that the health provider has been authorized and assigned to perform the task by the employer or a regulated health professional other than an HCA;
- ensure that the client's care plan is being followed;
- provide a minimum of indirect supervision except in circumstances where the post-secondary institution and employer requirements permit remote supervision;
- report any issues or concerns to the regulated health professional responsible for the client's care; and
- address and provide guidance and support for any competence issues the health provider has in the performance of the task if it is within the HCA's scope of practice and competence. Otherwise, refer to a suitable regulated health professional.

## **Supervision of Another HCA**

An HCA may supervise another HCA performing ADLs, except when performing a restricted activity, to provide safe, competent, and ethical care to the client. HCAs can be registered under the general, provisional, transitional, or courtesy categories. Although the individuals on all four register categories are regulated health professionals, only those on the general or courtesy register are authorized to supervise other HCAs, such as those on the provisional and transitional registers.

### **Provisional HCAs**

Provisional HCAs refer to those who have completed the education portion of their HCA program but have not yet written or are awaiting results from the HCA Provincial Comprehensive Exam.

These HCAs include new graduates of an approved HCA program in Alberta who have partially met the requirements for general registration and those who are assessed for substantial equivalence (e.g., internationally educated HCAs and HCAs educated in Canada who do not hold a practice permit with another Canadian HCA regulator).

Provisional HCAs require supervision for all ADL tasks. Therefore, they must not assign an activity or task to or supervise another HCA, student, or any other person.

To supervise provisional HCAs, a supervising HCA must:

- ensure that the HCA being supervised has received the education and training necessary prior to performing the task;
- ensure that the HCA who is being supervised has been authorized and assigned to perform the task by the employer or a regulated health professional;
- ensure that the client's care plan is being followed;
- provide a minimum of indirect supervision except in circumstances where the employer permits remote supervision, such as in home care;
- report any issues or concerns regarding the task being performed by the HCA being supervised to the regulated health professional responsible for the client's care; and
- address and provide guidance and support for any competence issues of the HCA being supervised in the performance of the task if it is within the supervising HCA's scope of practice and competence. Otherwise, refer to a suitable regulated health professional.

### ***Transitional HCAs***

The transitional register includes individuals who had the following status before regulation: Substantially Equivalent - In Progress and Deemed Competent - In Progress (HCAs in progress of having their Competency Assessment Profile (CAP) assessment completed). Those successful within the one-year assessment period and who have met the entry-to-practice requirements will be eligible to apply for the General Register, while those unsuccessful will be removed from the transitional register.

Additionally, HCAs enrolled in an approved employer-based program before regulation will be placed on the transitional register until they satisfy educational requirements. Once these requirements are met, they can apply for the provisional register and take the Alberta Provincial Health Care Aide Exam.

HCAs on the transitional register require supervision for all ADL tasks. Therefore, they must not assign an activity or task to or supervise another HCA, student, or any other person. To supervise other HCAs, a supervising HCA must:

- ensure that the HCA being supervised has received the education and training necessary prior to performing the task;
- ensure that the HCA who is being supervised has been authorized and assigned to perform the task by the employer or a regulated health professional;
- ensure that the client's care plan is being followed;
- provide a minimum of indirect supervision except in circumstances where the post-secondary institution and employer requirements permit remote supervision;
- report any issues or concerns regarding the task being performed by the HCA being supervised to the regulated health professional responsible for the client's care; and
- address and provide guidance and support for any competence issues of the HCA being supervised in the performance of the task if it is within the supervising HCA's scope of practice and competence. Otherwise, refer to a suitable regulated health professional.

## **CONCLUSION**

This policy outlines the expectations and requirements for HCAs who supervise others in performing ADLs or tasks they are authorized to supervise, ensuring safe, ethical, and competent care. HCAs must possess the necessary skills and knowledge and adhere to regulatory requirements to perform and supervise an activity effectively.

Documents are updated frequently. For the most current version and access to related documents and resources, please visit the Knowledge Hub on [clha.com](http://clha.com).

If, after reading this document, you have questions about the expectations and requirements of HCA supervising others, please contact the Professional Practice Team at [practice@clha.com](mailto:practice@clha.com) or the Registration Department at [registration@clha.com](mailto:registration@clha.com). You can also call 780-484-8886 or 1-800-661-5877 (toll-free in Alberta)

## DEFINITIONS

**Accountable:** the duty to answer for the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities of one's actions.<sup>i</sup>

**Activities of daily living (ADL):** as defined in the HPA, an activity that an individual normally performs on their own behalf to maintain their health and well-being. In other words, these are tasks that the client would complete for themselves if they were not hindered by a health condition.

**Acuity:** the severity or urgency of an illness or medical condition.

**Authority/authorize:** refers to the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and **enforce** obedience. It can also mean the appropriate person to give orders or make decisions. This could include supervisors, managers, employers, charge nurses, or educators.

**Care plan:** a document that outlines the care to be provided to an individual. The client's abilities, physical, social, and emotional needs, as well as cultural and spiritual preferences, are considered when creating the care plan.<sup>ii</sup>

**Collaborate:** the process of working together with clients, their families, and other members of the healthcare team to determine and achieve a shared goal in the client's interest.

**Competence/competent:** the ability to apply the knowledge, skills, behaviours, judgments, and personal attributes required to practice safely and ethically. Personal attributes include attitudes, values, and beliefs.

**Courtesy register:** a register for temporary registration for a regulated HCA from another province or territory to work in Alberta for a specified reason.

**Enforce:** "making sure people obey a law or rule."<sup>iii</sup>

**General register:** a register for HCAs who have the required education and have completed exams for full registration in Alberta.

**Govern:** to lead, control, or manage an organization or group, often by creating rules and making decisions that guide their actions.

**Outcome:** the responses and events that happen after care is provided to the client.

**Practitioner:** under the *Canada Health Act*, a (healthcare) practitioner is a person lawfully entitled under the law of a province to provide health services in the place in which the services are provided by that person.

**Predictability:** the extent to which a client's health outcomes and future care needs can be expected.<sup>iv</sup>

**Provisional register:** a register for the temporary registration of a person who has the required education but has not completed the exam to meet the requirements of the general register as an HCA in Alberta.

**Regulatory requirements:** rules and guidance documents made by a regulatory body, such as CLHA, that govern the practices of its regulated members. Some examples of regulatory documents include CLHA standards of practice, code of ethics, policies, and practice guidelines.

**Requirements:** something that is needed.

**Responsible/responsibility:** the ability to respond and answer for one's actions and duties. Being responsible means that an individual is trustworthy and reliable.<sup>v</sup>

**Restricted activities:** health services that can only be performed by authorized persons because of the risks associated with the performance of these activities and the need to ensure that professionals possess the necessary competencies.

**Transitional register:** a register that allows individuals who are currently employed as HCAs to transition to become regulated members on the general register if they complete all the requirements. HCAs on the transitional register will have one year to complete the requirements, unless there are extenuating circumstances, in which case the HCA can apply for a further one-year extension.

**Unregulated healthcare providers:** care providers who are neither regulated under the HPA nor licensed by a regulatory body.

## REFERENCES

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- <sup>i</sup> Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators (CCPNR), Entry-Level Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses (2019), [Knowledge Hub - College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta \(clpna.com\)](http://www.clpna.com).
- <sup>ii</sup> FACT SHEET Residential Care Regulation Community Care and Assisted Living Act Care Plan. (2009). [Fact Sheet - Care Plan \(gov.bc.ca\)](http://gov.bc.ca) f
- <sup>iii</sup> [ENFORCE | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary](https://www.cambridge-dictionary.org.uk)
- <sup>iv</sup> British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives. (2022). *Nursing in a Team Approach; Stable or Predictable*. [https://www.bccnm.ca/Documents/learning/team\\_approach\\_stable\\_predictable.pdf](https://www.bccnm.ca/Documents/learning/team_approach_stable_predictable.pdf)
- <sup>v</sup> College of Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides of Alberta. CCPNR, *Entry-Level Competencies*. [CCPNR Entry-Level Competencies LPNs-ID-104799.pdf](https://www.clpna.com/Entry-Level-Competencies-LPNs-ID-104799.pdf)