

SALPN Council COVID-19 Teleconference: March 24th, 2020

Present	Position
Denise Kominetsky, LPN	Chair
Linda Ewen, LPN	Vice-Chair
Kirsten Hack, LPN	Council Member
Marlo Umahag, LPN	Council Member
Kathy Bradford	Public Appointee
Theo Bryson	Public Appointee
Mary Ellen Wellsch	Public Appointee
Lynsay Nair, LPN	Executive Director
Guests	
Dr. John Collins	EPAC Committee, Chair
Regrets	
Tina Sentes	Council Member

Call to Order: 1937hrs

Meeting Topic: Emergency Licensure and PN Program Provider Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

Agenda Item: Emergency Licensure

The Council was asked to make two decisions related to emergency licensure.

- A. Does the Council support waiving of the \$50.00 status change fee for LPNs who are currently of non-practicing status to practicing status for a period of two months?**
- B. Does the Council support the submission of regulatory bylaw amendments to the Minister of Health to accommodate emergency licensure if required?**

The Executive Director provided written and verbal background to the Council about the ongoing discussions between health regulators, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, and the Ministry of Health about emergency licensure requirements. Nine professions were identified as likely to be required in the event of health system overload. LPNs are included.

SALPN legal counsel suggests the development of regulatory bylaws in addition to offering the ability to change licensure status from non-practicing to practicing.

The Executive Director provided the following about non-practicing LPNs changing their licensure status to practicing:

- These are LPNs most often on maternity leave, and sometimes education or disability leave.
- LPNs of non-practicing status are eligible to change to practicing at anytime
- The difference in this process is the waiving of the status change fee
- It is likely the status change will be offered in 2-3-month increments.
- These individuals are the first option as they meet all requirements, and practicing status is available to them at any time.

Vice-Chair, Ewen questioned how many LPNs hold a non-practicing certificate. The Executive Director indicated there are 340 and explained the non-practicing group is of the lowest risk due to the fact they meet all requirements of licensure.

Chair, Kominetsky questioned if emergency licensure would be mandated or voluntary. The Executive Director indicated that it would be voluntary, and communication would remind LPNs to consider personal risk factors such as being immunocompromised.

Public Appointee, Wellsch questioned if there are a number of current licensees to draw from. The Executive Director indicated that it had been relayed by the Saskatchewan Health Authority that they will redeploy the current workforce and will access emergency licensees as a last resort.

Public Appointee, Bradford, asked if the RN regulator was responding in a similar way. The Executive Director indicated that they are responding in a similar fashion.

Motion to approve to offer a change of licensure status from non-practicing to practicing at no cost to the LPN for a period of time to be determined by the Registrar to support the delivery of health care services during the Covid-19 pandemic response.

M: Mary Ellen Wellsch

S: Theo Bryson

All in favour

Carried

Action Items:

- Report to the Council the initiation of implementation
- Report to the Council the number of LPNs changing licensure status
- Report to the Council the discovery of unintended consequences

The Executive Director provided further information about emergency licensure.

- The Saskatchewan Health Authority has identified the LPN profession as one that will not meet the anticipated demands of the pandemic and therefore has requested SALPN prepare for emergency licensure
- Regulators have been advised to prepare for the worst-case scenario and hope for the best. Worst case scenario includes and is not limited to issuing licenses to those who do not meet current requirements of licensure
- Internally, SALPN anticipates utilizing a tiered approach to emergency licensure

1. Those who still meet licensure requirements and have let their license lapse. They can currently return at any time.
2. Those who did not complete the IV initiation course but still meet the hours requirement.
3. Those who do not meet the hours requirement.
4. Those in the licensure process but have not met all requirements
5. Those who have not completed the PN program.

It was confirmed by the Executive Director that emergency licensees would have liability insurance through SALPN's current Errors & Omission policy.

Those who put their name forward will be asked to share their contact information and practice experience with the SHA.

Wording of the draft bylaw amendments were reviewed and discussed. The Executive Director indicated the following:

- The bylaw allows the Registrar to place restrictions on licensure as required. This includes a time frame and practice restrictions as the level of risk increases if we are forced to proceed through the tiered approach to emergency licensure. I.e: some individuals may not be allowed to utilize certain competencies
- The wording is in alignment with the preparation for the worst and hope for the best scenario – it will accommodate all options
- Licensure would be offered in time increments to be determined by the Registrar, but likely in 2-3 month increments
- The fees would be waived for the application process and emergency licensure

Upon review of the wording, it was noted wording might need to be revised to accommodate the last two tiers of potential licensees.

Public Appointee, Bradford indicates the last two groups of potential licensees are a risk to the public. Vice-Chair, Ewen stated removing the last two tiers would better meet the public protection mandate. Public Appointee, Wellsch, suggested the need for restrictions to be placed on those in this category.

It was explained the regulatory bylaw would still require confirmation at an AGM, even if approved by the Minister in advance. This reveals a risk in the current legislative structure.

Chair Kominetsky questioned the workload and the office's ability to manage the work associated with emergency licensure. The Executive Director indicated up to four staff are dedicated to the work associated with Covid-19. More staff can be "pulled" if required.

Through discussion, it was advised the proposed amendments could be amended if required by the Ministry.

Motion to submit an amendment to the SALPN Regulatory Bylaws as presented in Schedule A to accommodate Emergency Licensure in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

M: Linda Ewen

S: Kathy Bradford

All in favour

Carried

Action Items:

Report to the Council feedback and follow-up from the Ministry of Health

Send the legal opinion provided by SALPN Legal Counsel

Motion to make emergency licensure available at no cost, and for a period of time to be determined by the Registrar, to support the delivery of health care services during the Covid-19 pandemic response.

Motion: Mary Ellen Wellsch

Second: Marlo Umahag

All in favor

Carried

Action Items:

- Report to the Council the initiation of the process
- Report to the Council the number of emergency licenses issued

- Report to the Council the discovery of unintended consequences

Agenda Item: PN Program Provider Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Executive Director advised the Council that the Saskatchewan Polytechnic PN Program is asking the SALPN Council to provide input related to the challenges they are facing with the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The Executive Director provided the following background information:

- The Practical Nursing program is a two-year diploma program. Currently, Saskatchewan Polytechnic students have students in both year one and two.
- The first-year students are nearly done their first year and have transitioned to online delivery for the remainder of the term.
- The second-year students are completing their instructor lead clinical portion. About 75 hours remain. Some of this has been augmented with a virtual component.
- Regional colleges have transitioned theory to the online program and have halted clinical
- Students are yet to begin what is typically known as a "final practicum" – which is a placement in a facility they have selected as a "top choice" where 150 hours are spent with an LPN preceptor
- If the program were to end today, the students would be short about 225 hours of the program – which is about 12-13% of the program.
- Practicum placements have not been discontinued as of yet due to the current low risk in Saskatchewan (there are currently very few hospitalized due to Covid). They will be discontinued by an agreement between the SHA and the education institution
- Students will never be assigned Covid patients if they were on a unit with Covid-19 patients
- Some students are upset about the practicums continuing
- Some faculty are upset about the practicums continuing
- In response, Sask Polytechnic has made participation optional, but the student is required to withdraw from the program and can return at a later date
- Students brought their concerns to the media – SALPN was contacted about the same

The Executive Director advised the Council that the students must meet the entry-level competencies of the profession, with no exception.

The Executive Director advised the Council about the financial risk of students not completing the program.

Chair, Kominetsky, and Council Member, Hack shared experiences with simulation learning, highlighting the pros and cons.

Meeting guest and EPAC Chair, Dr. John Collins, joined the teleconference to serve as an advisor to the Council related to this matter and share his knowledge and experience with research related to the replacement of clinical and practicum with simulated and virtual learning options.

Dr. Collins provided information and explanation of the evidence to support various methods of providing instruction, including simulation and virtual learning. The benefits, challenges, and limitations to each were explained.

Public Appointee, Bradford, expressed that the role of SALPN is to ensure the students will be competent to carry out the work of an LPN and the concern for the public if they do not complete the program.

A discussion was held about the complications that are hindering practicum opportunities with following points noted:

- Increased risk with the ongoing pandemic
- Not have enough equipment for students
- Preceptors schedules may be unpredictable, or they may become ill
- Quality of preceptorship not being present

Through consensus, it was agreed the most effective approach would be to require the program providers to report to the SALPN Council how they feel they could best address the issues as they are aware of their own resources and capabilities. Dr. Collins was asked to draft a letter to the program recognizing their skills and expertise in this area and ask them to address this issue collaboratively.

Meeting Finalization:

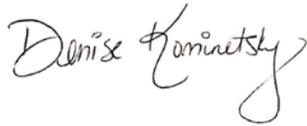
The Executive Director provided the Council with a general update.

- SIIT has suspended programs and services until further notice.
- The accountant is developing a budget line for CoVid 19 expenses that would include legal fees, consultations, teleconferences, etc.
- the priority of AGMs is in discussion between the Ministry and Regulators

- many office processes are delayed at this time
- extensions are being offered for English language requirements,
- exam writing sites are closed
- The auditor is still working on the SALPN file and has made contact with questions

Meeting adjournment: 2140 HRS

Signed,



Denise Kominetsky; SALPN Chair



Lynsay Nair; SALPN Executive Director