

Hepatology Nursing Standards

Canadian Association of Hepatology Nurses

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Canadian Association Hepatology Nursing Standards

Canadian Association of Hepatology Nurses (CAHN) is a national professional organization that represents and supports hepatology nurses across Canada. We support evidence-based clinical practice and promote leadership, education, and research.

Purpose of Standards:

In accordance with the nursing profession's obligation to maintain and improve the quality of nursing care, CAHN standards provide a basis for the evaluation of professional, ethical nursing practice in hepatology.

Background:

The context for nursing practice is characterized by life-long learning and continuing competence to provide high quality care¹. This is applicable to hepatology nursing practice as a specialty. In 2005, CAHN executive empowered a committee of hepatology nurses representing many practice contexts across Canada to establish the hepatology nursing standards. This group reviewed the literature, accessed similar work developed in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom to develop the standards. The first edition was made public in January 2007 and revised in June 2019. The standards will be reviewed annually and revised as required.

These standards reflect the current state of knowledge and practice and are, therefore, conditional, dynamic and subject to change. The manner in which hepatology nursing achieves competency will vary. Nursing practice is impacted by social, cultural, spiritual, economic and political environments.

The ongoing changes in hepatology nursing create opportunities for leadership, collaborative practice, and nurse-led research.

The standards are based on Benner's Conceptual Model (1984)² and are operationalized under the following domains and illustrated in Figure 1.

- I. Provides competent and professional care.
- II. Performs and/or refines client assessment.
- III. Administers and/or monitors therapeutic interventions.
- IV. Manages rapidly changing situations.
- V. Intervenes with the teaching/coaching function.
- VI. Monitors and ensures the quality of health care practices.
- VII. Practices within organizational and professional practice structures.

With the client as its central focus, these domains encompass the hepatology nursing role of leadership, research, education and clinical practice. The term

client is defined as individuals, families, groups, populations, and communities. These standards address youth and adult hepatology nursing practice.



CAHN Mission, Vision, and Beliefs about Hepatology Nursing

- Hepatology nursing is a specialized area of nursing that has its focus on promotion of liver health, prevention of illness, and the care of clients experiencing liver related health problems and disorders. This specialty addresses a variety of diseases and disorders of the liver including viral, genetic, and metabolic.
- Hepatology nursing is client-centered and is accountable for individual and collaborative practice. Nursing roles in this specialty include direct clinical practice, education, research, and leadership.
- Hepatology nursing client populations may be influenced by the social determinants of health and include priority populations.

- Hepatology nursing provides services across the client care continuum from prevention to palliation.
- Since most liver diseases are chronic in nature, hepatology nursing practice promotes self-care, advocates for resources and supports the client through the illness experience.
- The advancement of hepatology nursing requires evidence-based practice, critical thinking, and life-long learning. Hepatology nursing is responsible for promoting evidence and theory-based practice to enhance knowledge and skill development within the specialty.
- Hepatology nursing uses research, theory, experiential knowledge from nursing and other disciplines to provide evidence-based practice.

Standard I: Provides competent and professional care.

Competent and professional care is fundamental to nursing within the context of leadership, education, research and clinical practice. Due to the silent nature of liver disease, the hepatology nurse faces unique practice challenges in identification, linkage, and management of liver disease.

The Nurse:

- 1.1 Assesses and clarifies the influences of the clients' personal beliefs, values and life experiences.
- 1.2 Establishes and maintains a non-judgmental, client-centred environment.
- 1.3 Uses a range of therapeutic communication skills.
- 1.4 Recognizes the need for trauma informed care and respects boundaries.
- 1.5 Recognizes the influence of culture and ethnicity and provides care that is individualized.
- 1.6 Mobilizes resources that increase clients' access to health care and social services.
- 1.7 Supports the client through change while acknowledging their responsibility, participation, and choices in own care.
- 1.8 Promotes clients' resiliency .
- 1.9 Reflectively evaluates the therapeutic effectiveness of relationships.

Standard II: Performs and/or refines client assessment

Nursing makes professional judgements regarding the relevance and importance of the client assessment.

The Nurse:

- 2.1 Collaborates with clients to complete holistic assessments through observation, interview, examination, and clarification, while maintaining confidentiality.
- 2.2 Documents and analyzes data to identify health status and health needs; then prioritizes on an on-going basis.
- 2.3 Anticipates changes in the future course of the client's status.
- 2.4 Formulates and documents a plan of care in collaboration with the client and the care team.

Standard III: Administers and/or monitors therapeutic interventions

Hepatology nurses coordinate care plans which include pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapeutic interventions.

The Nurse:

- 3.1 Provides evidence-based education and recommendations to clients to make choices to support change.
- 3.2 Supports clients to draw on own strengths and community resources to support self-efficacy, self care, and health promotion.
- 3.3 Uses appropriate technology to perform safe, effective and efficient nursing intervention
- 3.4 Administers and monitors medications competently.
- 3.5 Provides a spectrum of health promotion options (e.g. lifestyle modification, harm reduction).
- 3.6 Assesses client response to therapy and evaluates the need for changes in the treatment plan.
- 3.7 Collaborates with the client, family, health care providers, and community to access and co-ordinate resources.

- 3.8 Assesses the client's experience and/or perception of services.

Standard IV: Manages rapidly changing situations

The effective management of rapidly changing situations is essential in critical circumstances. These situations include client deterioration. This domain also includes evaluation of contributing factors and complications related to liver disease.

The Nurse:

- 4.1 Assesses clients for mental health and addictions status.
- 4.2 Has knowledge of and access to resources required to manage potential emergency situations.
- 4.3 Monitors client safety and utilizes continual assessment to detect early changes in client status and intervenes as required.
- 4.4 Considers the legal and ethical implications of responses to rapidly changing situations, and evaluates effectiveness.
- 4.5 Participates in 'debriefing' process with team (including client and family) and other service providers.
- 4.6 Explores with the client and/or family the precipitates of the emergency event and plans to minimize risk of recurrence.

Standard V: Intervenes with the teaching/coaching function

All client interactions are potentially teaching and learning situations. Hepatology nursing strives to understand the life experience of the client to support and promote learning. A primary goal of hepatology nursing is the promotion of liver health and the prevention of liver related diseases/conditions.

The Nurse:

- 5.1 Determines learning needs in collaboration with the client.
- 5.2 Plans and implements health education while considering the context of the client's life experience and readiness to learn.

- 5.3 Considers a variety of learning models and utilizes clinical judgement when creating opportunities with clients regarding their learning needs.
- 5.4 Provides health promotion and prevention information to individuals, families, groups, populations, and communities.
- 5.5 Documents the teaching provided.
- 5.6 Evaluates the effectiveness of the educational process, and client comprehension.
- 5.7 Seeks clients' input into developing other means of providing teaching and learning opportunities.

Standard VI: Monitors and ensures the quality of health care practices

It is essential for the hepatology nurse to have knowledge of diverse populations and current clinical practice guidelines; while promoting client advocacy. Relevant legislation and privacy issues must be adhered to.

The Nurse:

- 6.1 Identifies limitations in the workplace or care setting that interferes with the nurse's ability to perform with skill, safety and compassion and takes appropriate action.
- 6.2 Identifies limitations at a community level that interfere with the entire health of the community.
- 6.3 Expands knowledge of innovations and changes in hepatology nursing practice to ensure safe and effective care.
- 6.4 Critically evaluates and applies current liver research findings in practice.
- 6.5 Acts as a mentor for nursing students and the novice practitioner in the provision of hepatology nursing care.
- 6.6 Works effectively within a collaborative team towards an integrated plan of care.
- 6.7 Advocates for safe, competent and ethical care for clients in the presence of system barriers (e.g. linkage to care, medication coverage).
- 6.8 Maintains confidentiality and privacy of client information in accordance with provincial legislation.

Standard VII: Practices within the organizational and professional practice structures

Hepatology nurses practice in a variety of settings. Hepatology nursing care is based on critical thinking and evidence-based practice. As hepatology care in Canada evolves, the hepatology nurse needs to be skilled in collaborative partnering with other healthcare professionals, community, and policy makers.

The Nurse:

- 7.1 Demonstrates leadership to facilitate interdisciplinary health team interactions and functioning.
- 7.2 Uses information systems in planning, documenting and evaluating population care (e.g. electronic health records, research indexes and databases).
- 7.3 Demonstrates knowledge of collaborative strategies in working with those who have lived experience and advocacy groups.
- 7.4 Actively participates in developing, implementing and evaluating policies that impact the provision of nursing liver care (e.g. quality improvement).
- 7.5 Conducts, participates in, and/or supports hepatology research.
- 7.6 Supports professional efforts in hepatology practice to achieve improved population health.
- 7.7 Endeavours to improve visibility of hepatology nursing at the local, provincial, national, and international level.
- 7.8 Leverages knowledge to influence policy development and political action to address gaps in the hepatology care cascade.

Glossary

These descriptions apply for the purposes of this document.

Clients:	Individuals, families, groups, populations or communities. Synonymous terms may be patients, beneficiaries, partners, recipients, and consumers. Clients exist in social systems that may influence their health.
Competencies:	The integrated knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgements expected of the nurse ¹
Harm reduction:	Harm reduction is a pragmatic response that focuses on keeping people safe and minimizing death, disease, and injury associated with high-risk behaviour while recognizing that the behaviour might continue despite the risk ³ .
Hepatology health promotion:	The process of enhancing the capacity of individuals and communities to take control over their lives and improve their hepatology health. Hepatology health promotion uses strategies that foster supportive environments and individual resilience, while showing respect for culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity.
Holistic assessment:	A data collection process which recognizes the interrelated physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social dimensions of the person, family or group participating with the nurse in the process.
Rapidly changing liver status:	Severe impairments of thought and judgment, constituting a medical emergency, which can occur in association with drug misuse, encephalopathy, ascites, and esophageal varices hemorrhage.

Trauma informed care:	Trauma informed care (TIC) takes into account the universality of history of trauma in all aspects of service delivery. TIC prioritizes safety, choice, and client control ⁴ .
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References

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