

ABC Soup:

A GUIDE TO THE DIFFERENT NURSING ORGANIZATIONS AND WHAT THEY DO FOR YOU

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August 29, 2023

There are many different nursing organizations, most referenced by abbreviations. The abbreviations and the roles have changed over the last few years. Nurses tell us they are unsure of the differences and not clear on who does what. This is particularly true for those who have been in practice 10+ years, as the situation has changed quite dramatically.

Abbreviation	Full Name
ARNM	Association of Regulated Nurses of Manitoba
CNA	Canadian Nurses Association
CFNU	Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions
CLPNM	College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba
CNPS	Canadian Nurses Protective Society
CNSA	Canadian Nursing Students Association
CRNM	College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba
CRPNM	College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba
ICN	International Council of Nurses
MNU	Manitoba Nurses Union
NPAM	Nurse Practitioners Association of Manitoba
RHPA	Regulated Health Professions Act

HISTORY

Nurses have been self-regulating in Manitoba for over 100 years. This means that nurses have had the legislated right to decide who is a member of the profession and who can use the title “Nurse”. The predecessor of CRNM was founded in 1908. Psychiatric nursing got its start in 1923 and LPNs were first licensed in 1945.

In the mid-1970s, the Manitoba Organization of Nurses Associations was formed, and in 1990 that became MNU. The number of workplaces represented by MNU continues to grow.

In 2014, the RHPA was proclaimed, and RNs recognized that their professional association mandate would shift to protecting the public, rather than the dual role of promoting nursing and protecting the public. A small group of nurses formed the Manitoba RN Network, which is now ARNM, to fulfill the nursing advocacy role. In 2020, ARNM’s mandate expanded to include all nurses in the province as other Colleges were coming under the RHPA.

CNA was formed over 100 years ago to represent RNs nationally and to join the international nursing community. Nurses were members by virtue of their membership in a provincial licensing body. As the regulation landscape changed, so did CNA’s membership model. In 2022, membership was expanded to include all nurses across Canada who chose to become members and was totally separated from provincial territorial Colleges and Associations.

CURRENT STATE

The words college, union and association may be used in different ways. A college for example can be an educational institution that offers basic or advanced nursing education or a regulatory body in nursing. Some unions and interest groups may include the word association in their title.

Organization	Role	Examples
College/ Regulator	Serve and protect the public	CLPNM, CRPNM, CRNM
College/Educational Institution	Advance nursing education	University of Manitoba College of Nursing Assiniboine Community College
Union	Support the nurse and strengthen working conditions	MNU, CFNU
Association	Advance the profession and improve health of the public	ARNM, NPAM, CNA, ICN
Liability Protection	Provides protection for nurses in legal situations	CNPS

All of us have choices about where we decide to be members, and those choices have consequences. Regulatory Colleges are mandatory if a nurse wants to practice actively in their profession. There are 23 nursing Colleges across the country. Some provinces, like BC and Ontario have one College for all nurses. In Manitoba, there are 3 Colleges for nurses. Each sets its own requirements for issuing certificates of practice, within the RHPA.

These include paying the prescribed fee, obtaining various record checks, completing continuing professional education, and providing evidence of liability protection. If these are not completed by the time specified in the College regulations, the nurse is not eligible to practice in Manitoba. Fees are set by the College and need to be paid before registration is complete.

In most cases, registration is unique to each province or territory so nurses may be required to register with more than one provincial or territorial College if they are involved in travel or virtual nursing.

All regulatory Colleges in Manitoba require CNPS coverage as of fall 2023. This covers liability for legal issues arising from practice, including civil and criminal concerns, and appearing as a witness. CNPS also offers supplementary protection for issues regarding complaints to the regulator. The rates for basic CNPS coverage vary and are set by CNPS.

Union dues may be mandatory, depending on the job you hold. Approximately 2/3 of practicing nurses in Manitoba work in roles covered by MNU, and MNU represents 97% of unionized nurses in the province. Union dues are deducted by employers and submitted directly to MNU. Membership in MNU also provides membership in CFNU. Other nurses work in non-union roles, or in positions covered by other unions such as educators in educational institutions, nurses working in Corrections and those employed by the Federal or First Nations governments.

Associations are voluntary. As of June 2023, approximately 50% of Manitoba's regulated nurses have chosen to be members of ARNM. Student and retired nurses can also be members. Members have a voice in advocacy efforts on behalf of all nurses; access to ongoing professional development; ability to be nominated for Awards of Excellence and access to membership discounts, including discounts for CNPS and CNA. Until 2021, membership in ARNM also included membership in CNA. Now, membership in CNA is separate.

Each nurse practicing must be a member of at least one College. They must pay union dues if they are employed in a unionized position. They may choose to be a member of one or more Associations.

Memberships in many of the organizations are annual, with renewal in the fall.

Each nurse must:

- Renew with their College (CLPNM, CRPNM, CRNM)
- Obtain liability protection from CNPS

Nurses may choose to:

- Obtain or renew membership in ARNM
- Obtain or renew membership in CNA (which includes ICN)

All these groups offer support to nurses but may differ in their approaches to an issue and their suggestions.

All the organizations have a web site which is a great place to start.

Some of the most common questions received, and the most appropriate organization to respond are listed on the following page.

Issue	Responding Organization	Exceptions
Is my practice nursing practice?	CLPNM, CRPNM, CRNM	If it occurs in another province
Is my practice ethical?	CLPNM, CRPNM, CRNM, CNA	
Is my practice legal?	CNPS	
Am I getting the right salary or benefits?	MNU	If non union, HR department, CNPS or employment lawyer
What educational opportunities exist?	All have different information	
I have received a legal notice I don't understand	CNPS	
The College has notified me of a complaint	College website for process information	CNPS if you have supplemental coverage
How do I get involved in making a difference in the health system?	ARNM (in Manitoba) CNA (across Canada)	
I have ideas on how to resolve the Health Human Resource Crisis	MNU, ARNM, CNA	
I want to be part of a specialty group but can't find the contact information	ARNM, CNA	
I am a student and want to be part of a nursing organization beyond my school	ARNM, CNA, CLPNM, CNSA	
I want to be certified in my specialty	CNA	
I still don't know who to ask	The nursing organizations work together, so contact any one to point you in the right direction.	