



**ANBLPN | AIAANB**

Association of New Brunswick Licensed  
Practical Nurses

L'Association des Infirmier(ère)s Auxiliaires  
Autorisé(e)s du Nouveau-Brunswick

*The Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses is the regulatory authority for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in New Brunswick. Our mandate is protection of the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical, and compassionate care by its registrants.*

### **WHAT IS PRONOUNCEMENT OF DEATH?**

Pronouncement of death involves completing a physical assessment on a client whereby an opinion is formulated that life has ceased based on the assessment data collected (CMPA, 2019). This assessment involves determining that vital signs are now absent, and the client has died.

### **CAN AN LPN PRONOUNCE DEATH?**

Despite past assumptions, there is no legal requirement stating that a physician or nurse practitioner must pronounce death. In New Brunswick, it is within an LPNs scope of practice to pronounce death providing the LPN has the knowledge, competence, and professional judgement to determine the cessation of life (NSCN, 2019). LPNs are also obligated to follow any employer policies that may be in place pertaining to pronouncement of death in their workplaces.

### **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRONOUNCING DEATH AND CERTIFYING DEATH?**

Pronouncement of death and certifying death are two different things. Certifying death is a legal process whereby an individual attests to the fact, cause, and manner of death in writing on a form approved by the province (CMPA, 2019). In New Brunswick, only physicians and nurse practitioners are permitted to certify death.

## **FACT SHEET:**

### **PRONOUNCEMENT OF DEATH**

- *Pronouncement of death is within an LPNs scope of practice*
- *LPNs must be knowledgeable, competent and practice professional judgement*
- *LPNs must follow facility policies regarding pronouncement of death*

### **ASSOCIATION OF NEW BRUNSWICK LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES**

384 Smythe Street  
Fredericton, NB  
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### **IF THE DEATH IS UNEXPECTED, WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

If a client has died unexpectedly, or under unusual circumstances, the LPN should collaborate with the health care team and consult with the client's physician or nurse practitioner to determine next steps (NSCN, 2019). The provincial Coroner Services is mandated to review all suspicious or questionable deaths in New Brunswick and conduct inquests as required. If a death is unexpected the death should be reported to a coroner or medical examiner (CNPS, 2003).

### **WHAT IS AN INQUEST?**

An inquest is a formal investigation into a sudden, unexpected, or suspicious death that has been reported to Coroner Services. Coroner Services are then responsible to investigate the reported death. The purpose of the inquest is to answer; (1) who the deceased is, (2) date of death, (3) location of death, (4) reason for death, and (5) manner of the death (e.g. accident, homicide, suicide, natural or undetermined (CNPS, 2003).

## **FACT SHEET**

### **PRONOUNCEMENT OF DEATH**

- *Pronouncement of death and certifying death are not the same*
- *Unexpected deaths must be reported to physicians/nurse practitioners and reported to Coroner Services*

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## References

- Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses. (2020). *New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses Competency Profile*. [https://www.anblpn.ca/resources/NB\\_LPN\\_Competency.pdf](https://www.anblpn.ca/resources/NB_LPN_Competency.pdf)
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- Nova Scotia College of Nursing. (2019). *Pronouncing and Certifying Death*. <https://cdn1.nscn.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/PronouncingCertifyingDeath.pdf>