

**COMPETENCY VALIDATION PROCESS**  
**NASOPHARYNGEAL SWAB**  
**NOVEMBER 2020**  
*Supersedes SEPTEMBER 2020*

The purpose of this competency validation process is to ensure that clinicians, named in this document, possess the competencies to safely and appropriately perform sample collection using a nasopharyngeal swab. The individual clinician is responsible to meet/maintain the competency requirements, as per their regulated scope of practice and /or as directed by the Public Health Officer order(s) prior to performing NP swabs.

**ADULT NASOPHARYNGEAL SWABS:**

**Registered Nurses** ((RN) includes Nurse Practitioners) and **Registered Psychiatric Nurses** (RPN): who possess competencies may perform nasopharyngeal (NP), nose, and throat sample collection autonomously or with an Authorized Prescriber\*\* order following the BC College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM) standards for restricted activities within autonomous nursing practice and/or with client specific orders:

- It is recommended that RNs and RPNs complete this competency validation process

**Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN):** After completing additional education and this competency validation process LPNs may perform nasopharyngeal (NP) nose and throat sample collection with an Authorized Prescriber order\*\* and when following the BCCNM standards for restricted activities with a client specific order:

- **BCCNM Limit:** LPNs **do not** perform nasopharyngeal washes
- **BCCNM Notice: March 19, 2020.** Effective immediately and for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency in British Columbia, the requirement in the BCCNM standards, limits and conditions for licensed practical nurses to have additional education prior to performing nasopharyngeal swabs is temporarily rescinded.
- **Due to COVID-19** the PHO issued an order on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 allowing LPNs to perform NP swab collection without a client specific order under the conditions that:
  - NP swab collection is performed as part of a screening program approved by the IH MHO and with an order\*\* from the MHO, (i.e. a client specific order is not required).
  - The screening program is conducted according to BCCDC Guidelines
  - The LPN successfully completes this competency validation process with an IH RN or RPN who is already competent in NP swab collection
  - Once competent the LPN may continue to perform this activity until the PHO rescinds or provides notice that the order ends

**Respiratory Therapists (RT):** Respiratory Therapists (RT) who have successfully completed this competency validation process with a competent peer may perform nasopharyngeal, nose, and throat sample collection with an Authorized Prescriber\*\* order.

- **Due to COVID-19** RTs may also perform NP swab collection as part of an IH MHO approved screening program under the conditions that:
  - NP swab collection is performed as part of a screening program approved by the IH MHO and with an order\*\* from the MHO.
  - The screening program is conducted according to BCCDC Guidelines
  - The RT successfully completes this competency validation process with an IH RN or RPN who is already competent in NP swab collection
  - Once competent the RT may continue to perform this activity until MHO approved screening program ends.

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### Midwives, Certified Speech Language Pathologists, Speech Language Pathologists, Physical Therapists, Dental Hygienists, Occupational Therapists, Dietitians, Audiologists, and Pharmacists:

- **Due to COVID-19** the PHO issued orders on 16 Nov, 2020 allowing these regulated health care professionals (HCP) to perform NP swab collection, under the conditions that:
  - NP swab collection is performed as part of a screening program approved by the IH MHO and with an order\*\* from the MHO.
  - The screening program is conducted according to BCCDC Guidelines
  - The HCP successfully completes this competency validation process with an IH RN or RPN who is already competent in NP swab collection
  - Once competent the HCP may continue to perform this activity until the PHO rescinds or provides notice that the order ends

\*\*An Authorized Prescriber is a Most Responsible Provider (MRP) - Physician or Nurse Practitioner (NP). During declared Public Health Emergencies may also be the IH Medical Health Officer (MHO) (or equivalent process established by the health authority).

**PEDIATRIC NASOPHARYNGEAL SWABS:** Prior to conducting pediatric nasopharyngeal swabs all clinicians must:

- complete this competency validation process (below) *AND* perform NP swabs under the direct supervision of an RN or LPN, (who is authorized under a health profession regulation, and competent, to perform the Screening Activity) and who is experienced in dealing with the pediatric population until the healthcare provider demonstrates and reports competence

**COMPETENCY VALIDATION PROCESS:** To achieve competency the individual clinician completes the following process:

#### NOTES:

- **Links to all resources listed below are found in the [COVID-19 Screening, Assessment & Sample Collection toolkit](#)**
- This process may be completed as necessary to maintain competence

#### KNOWLEDGE:

1. Complete a self-directed review of:
  - [BCCNM Scope of Practice standards](#) – Nursing only and designation specific (RN, RPN & LPN) that relate to autonomous nursing practice, restricted activities and nasopharyngeal swabs
  - [BC Centre for Disease Control \(BCCDC\) Guidelines](#): Viral testing. Including:
    - Adult testing & Lab guidelines
    - Pediatric testing & Lab guidelines (if applicable to clinical practice)
    - Who to test
    - Specimen collection: PPE, Adult, Children and Youth, Labelling
    - Patient handout: self-isolation while waiting for results
    - Outpatient management
  - [IH COVID-19 Screening, Assessment and Sample Collection: Community Clinical Practice Standard](#)
  - Interior Health(IH) [Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#), Routine, Contact, Droplet and Airborne precautions
  - Poster: [Nasopharyngeal Flocked Swabs](#) and UTM™ How to guide

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**SKILL & ATTITUDE:**

2. Review a video that shows how to perform nasopharyngeal sample collection:
  - **Adult:** [How to perform a Nasopharyngeal Swab](#). Providence Health Care video
  - **Pediatric:** [Positioning and Holding for Child COVID-19 Nasopharyngeal\(NP\) swab collection](#) PHSA video
3. Observe a competent Nurse perform the procedure
4. Have a competent Nurse observe the first procedure.
  - Note: for competency in **pediatric** NP swab collection, the clinician must perform the procedure on pediatric patients, under direct supervision of a competent Nurse **who has experience managing the pediatric population**, until the healthcare provider demonstrates and reports competence

**JUDGEMENT:**

5. Complete [i-learn](#) competency validations to declare personal competence:
  - # 2498 Adult patients
  - # 2712 Pediatric patients

**References:**

British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives. Nursing Standards. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.bccnp.ca/Standards/Pages/Default.aspx>

British Columbia Ministry of Health (2020). Order of the Provincial Health Officer. Licensed Practical Nurse SARS-CoV-2 Swabbing Order May 7, 2020. Retrieved from:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-lpn-swabbing.pdf>

British Columbia Ministry of Health (2020). Order of the Provincial Health Office. MIDWIVES AND CERTIFIED PRACTICE SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS SARS-CoV-2 SWABBING – November 16, 2020. Retrieved from:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus#orders>

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