

Medical Directive Needed for Skin Pricking in a Public Hospital

Need to know

In public hospital inpatient and outpatient hospital-based programs, RDs may not perform skin pricks without an order or medical directive. Outside of a public hospital setting, RDs have no legal restrictions in performing skin pricks when practicing dietetics.

The College has developed a document titled: *Guidelines for the Disposal of Biomedical Waste Associated with Skin Pricking*. This resource will help guide RDs to ensure they are following appropriate medical waste disposal and infection control protocols when performing skin pricks. This resource can be accessed under the Resources section of the CDO website.

RDs now have the authority to perform skin pricks for the purpose of collecting blood samples for monitoring capillary blood readings while practicing dietetics. There are two corresponding legislation amendments that enabled this authority:

1. Dietetics Act (1991):

Authorized act

3.1 In the course of engaging in the practice of dietetics, a member is authorized, subject to the terms, conditions and limitations imposed on his or her certificate of registration, to take blood samples by skin pricking for the purpose of monitoring capillary blood readings. 2009, c. 26, s. 7.

2. Laboratory Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act (1991):

"specimen collection centre" means a place where specimens are taken or collected from the human body for examination to obtain information for diagnosis, prophylaxis or

treatment, but does not include, ... (b.1) a place where a member of the College of Dietitians of Ontario is engaged in the practice of dietetics...

The *Dietetics Act* specifies that it is within the dietetic scope of practice for RDs to perform skin pricks. The *Laboratory Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act* (LSCCLA) specifies that when RDs perform skin pricks while practicing dietetics, they are not considered to be specimen collection centres, and are thus excluded from the requirements (such as licensing and inspections) as outlined in the LSCCLA.

PUBLIC HOSPITAL RESTRICTIONS

Despite the amendments to the *Dietetics Act* and the LSCCLA which give authority to RDs to perform skin pricks within the dietetic scope of practice, a regulation under the *Public Hospitals Act* still applies:

24. (1) Every order for treatment or for a diagnostic procedure of a patient shall, except as provided in subsection (2), be in writing and shall be dated and authenticated by the physician, dentist, midwife or registered nurse in the extended class giving the order. O. Reg. 64/03, s. 10.

As skin pricks are a diagnostic procedure, in a public hospital setting, RDs still require an order from an authorized practitioner or a medical directive to perform this procedure.

In an outpatient public hospital setting, each facility would need to interpret whether their outpatient programs fall under the *Public Hospitals Act*. If they do, RDs would require an order or medical directive to perform skin pricks. Outside of a public hospital setting, RDs have no legal restrictions to perform skin pricks when practicing dietetics.