

## Bulletin 250103

**To: Nova Scotia Regulator of Paramedicine Registrants**

**Date: January 03, 2025**

**Re: Updates to Standards of Practice, including Introduction of 5.1 Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Abuse**

We are pleased to provide an update on the Nova Scotia Regulator of Paramedicine (“the Regulator”) Standards of Practice and their implementation, including a new standard addressing Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Abuse.

Since migrating under the *Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA)* in June 2024, the Regulator has been updating its regulatory tools. One significant update is the introduction of a Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Abuse Standard of Practice, mandated by the Department of Health and Wellness.

Most of the requirements and language used within this standard were developed by a working group within [the Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network](#) (“the Network”), which the Regulator is a member of, and approved by the Networks Council. Legal Counsel supported the working group.

In turn, the information from the Network was further defined and approved by the Nova Scotia Regulator of Paramedicine Board for use within the practice of paramedicine.

The language and structure of the Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Abuse standard is intended to be clear, protective, and equitable. The Regulator recognizes that it addresses sensitive and complex issues, which can elicit strong reactions. Including specific definitions, timelines, and expectations prevents ambiguity and ensures consistency in their application.

### **Key highlights of the Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Abuse standard include:**

- It defines “Sexual Misconduct” and “sexual abuse” as per the *RHPA* General Regulations.
- Establishes a twelve (12) month cooling-off period after the last care provided by a registrant before any relationship can develop, provided the client is not a “vulnerable former client”. This was established to acknowledge the power imbalance that may persist even after the cessation of care. This timeline reflects careful consideration of the therapeutic relationship and its lingering effects, ensuring clients are protected during this vulnerable period and the practice of most other self-regulated healthcare professions. While shorter timeframes were considered, the twelve (12) month standard provides clarity and consistency, balancing fairness with the imperative to safeguard patients.
- The introduction of definitions for “client,” “spouse,” “intimate partner,” “vulnerable former client,” and “vulnerability.”
- Mandatory duty to report requirements.
- Cooperating with any regulatory process related to this Standard.

The introduction of the Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Abuse standard resulted in an update to the 5.0 Professional Boundaries standard and the use of the term “client” throughout all the standards of practice.

The term “client” is used in place of the term “patient” which most registrants use.

We are confident that the new Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Abuse and the remainder of the Standards of Practice are aligned with the principles of fairness, public interest, and professional accountability.

**Key highlights regarding the implementation of all the standards of practice include:**

- To comply with Government requirements, the Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Abuse standard will take **effect on January 8, 2025**.
- The remaining standards will come into **effect on April 1, 2025**.
- To support ongoing dialogue and education, the Regulator will offer Registrants information sessions between January and March 2025 to assist in their understanding and applying these standards.
- Please watch your email for notices from the Regulator regarding dates and times for these information sessions.

In the meantime, we encourage all registrants to familiarize themselves with all the Standards of Practice, which may be accessed via this hyperlink [NSRoP Standards of Practice](#).