



Podortho® Personal Support Worker Foot Care Standard of Practice for the delivery of foot care in Ontario- January 2024

The Ontario Personal Support Worker Association (OPSWA) in conjunction with the Canadian Personal Support Worker Association (CPSWA) and in collaboration with the Ontario Foot Care Association Inc. (OFCA) have designed this **Foot Care Standard of Practice** to serve as a “framework” from which all Personal Support Workers (PSW) who have or intend to advanced their “entry to practise competencies” through post graduate continued theoretical education and skilled hands-on clinical training offering **essential foot care services**.

PSW's are permitted to apply their entry to practise competencies and gain specialized knowledge, skills, and judgment to offer conservative hygienic foot care independently considering Ontario's legal health care framework communicated through the Regulated Health Professions Act, (RHPA). PSW's and various other Health Care Providers (HCP) may deliver



“**non-controlled acts**” through the development of their own “independent scope of practice”.

Non-controlled or unregulated acts pose “no risk of harm”(1) and do not fall under the Regulated Health Professions Act framework. HCP are not legally precluded from performing a procedure beyond the profession's stated scope of practice (except for controlled, prohibited, or harmful acts), therefore scope of practice statements provided by regulatory colleges have little legal significance (2) . Healthcare services **not** involving a **controlled act, prohibited act, or harmful act** are in the public domain and may be performed by anyone.



OPSWA Foot Care Standard of Practice guide PSW's towards quality evidence-based education and training that recognizing their important and essential role through the delivery of safe and effective foot care offered to the public provincially and nationally.

OPSWA, CPSWA and OFCA provide insightful opinions and advice to ensure a high level of quality of education achieved to delivered in a safe, competent, and evidenced based manner by all PSW's and OPSWA/CPSWA members. All PSW's have the option to obtain the knowledge, skill, and competencies to deliver Essential Podortho® PSW Foot Care through superior learning engagement providing the PPSW with the confidence and competence to deliver this specialized care independently thus promoting hygienic foot care practises in a therapeutic and rehabilitative manner. Clients who require this care seek comfort and improved mobility and preventative solutions to meet their activities of daily living throughout the aging process. Given foot care is an essential need for our aging population to maintain good foot health and hygiene OPSWA encourages PSW's to pursue a career in this specialized area of care while

providing safe, respectful, and experienced quality foot care within the public domain in a dignified, ethical, sterile (as per public health regulations) in a non-invasive conservative approach.

The **Podortho® Personal Support Worker's (PPSW) program offers** options for PSW's to work in **independent practise or in multidisciplinary settings.**

This may include **private practise, long term care facilities, hospitals, community centers, in client's homes.** Wherever this care is delivered we view this as an **"essential health/personal care service"**

specifically geared towards our aging, growing and active population who wishes to remain independent in communities across our province and country.

This foot care health strategy aligns with our Ontario provincial governments new initiative to ensure maintenance care and preventative care is more accessible to keep our communities healthy and live independently.(3)



This **Foot Care Standards of Practice** document serves as an outline that underpins the minimum foot care education requirements that are expected of all PSW's. PSW's are expected to self-govern through self-reflection, peer feedback and ongoing continued education, and training to optimize their knowledge, skill and judgement that supports our changing and diverse population and public need within our communities across Ontario, Canada. This document contains a collection of routine practices in relation to the delivery of foot care provided by the PSW who has advanced their individual scope of health care practice to encompass foot inspection, foot hygiene, skin, and nail care, foot health client education, preventative interventions to decrease risk of foot and lower limb complications, creating a maintenance schedule for care and following up regularly to ensure positive foot health outcomes have been obtained. Developing this career requires accredited continued education approved by OPSWA. This accreditation through OPSWA ensures education programs are derived from evidence-based research, peer reviews, designed by seasoned educators who

have the knowledge, skills, and environment to provide skilled training and the necessary experience in the foot care industry and who best comprehend relevant legislation, scopes of practise (individual and regulatory) considering all RHCP and URHCP and overlapping care delivery.

OPSWA has identified this essential community need and supports a model of care whereby PSW's are well aligned to acquire the necessary education and skilled training to deliver essential foot care through conservative, non-invasive measures. This fosters faster access to care in the community and the hiring of qualified Health Care Workers to provide this specialized care.

The approved Podortho® Personal Support Worker (PPSW) Decision Chart Framework is as follows;

1.0 Understanding Legislations and Scopes of Health Care Practises

a. Scope of practice definition

This is a statement that describes what a profession does.

b. Individual scope of practice definition

Health care is forever changing and advancing thus continuing to engage in education and skilled training programs ensure a HCP knowledge, skill and judgment is up to date to ensure they are practicing in a safe and responsible manner through additional competencies the HCP has obtained throughout their health care career. HCP will obtain continued education in various areas based on their interest and careers path therefore, and individual scope of practice is obtained through the HCP own educational initiatives based on the learning outcomes and achieved competencies.





c. The RHPA (Regulated Health Professions Act)

This is an arm of the provincial government who make legislative decisions through consultations with various health care organizations and legal representatives. The RHPA oversees controlled acts that regulated health care providers are permitted to perform in each province. These legal acts are “procedures or activities which may pose a risk to the public if not performed by a qualified practitioner”.

d. Regulatory College’s

Regulatory colleges are corporations that govern each regulated health profession responsible for regulating the practice of the profession and govern their members according to the RHPA.

e. Legislated Scope of Practice

This is the scope of practice that encompasses controlled acts within the RHPA outlining procedures and activities various Regulated Health Care can and can not be performed.

f. Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC)

The HPRAC was an independent, arms-length advisory body to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care with a mandate to advise the Minister of Health on a number of items related to the regulation of health professions. *The Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC)* advised the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on topics related to the *roles of unregulated health care professions and who should be regulated* and whether regulated professions should no longer be regulated.



Amendments and to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, a health profession Act or a regulation under those Acts; quality assurance and patient relations programs of Ontario's health regulatory colleges; and on other matters referred to it by the Minister. Members of the Council are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. (3) The HPRAC was absolved (date unknown).

g. Duty of the Minister of Health

It is the duty of the Minister to ensure that the health professions are regulated and ***coordinated in the public interest***, and that appropriate standards of practice are developed and maintained ***and that individuals have access to services provided by the health professions of their choice*** and are ***treated with sensitivity and respect in their dealings with health professionals, the Colleges, and the Board.*** (4)

2.0 Role of the Podortho® Personal Support Workers (PPSWs)

PPSW's provide personal support in foot care to a wide range of clients and are employed or work in independent practise in the community sector, private homes and in institutional settings (for example, long-term care homes, private retirement homes and hospitals) across the province.

The PPSW's role in this area of care is demonstrated in the following chart below;





Procedures for which PPSW's provide are demonstrated in the below image;



OPSWA & OFCA September 2023

References

1. Ministry of Health. **[A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care](https://www.ontario.ca/YourHealth)** [ontario.ca/YourHealth](https://www.ontario.ca/YourHealth).

file:///C:/Users/erin/OneDrive%20-%20Feet%20for%20Life%20Medical%20Foot%20Care%20Ltd/Desktop/moh-your-health-plan-connected-convenient-care-en-2023-02-02-v3.pdf

2. 1991, c. 18, s. 3." -Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, 5.0. 1991, c. 18

3. Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, 5.0. 1991, c. 18 <https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/prograas/hhrsdaout/rhpa.aspx>

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