

Frequently Asked Questions:

Nurse Prescribing for Certified Nurses in Reproductive Health (STI and Contraceptive Management)

What is changing?

Beginning with the Fall 2026 cohort, the BCCDC STI Certification Course will include the prescribing competencies required for Certified Registered Nurses (RN(C)s) to obtain prescribing authority within their certification scope. To accommodate the additional learning and competency requirements, the course length has been extended by two weeks.

Similarly, BCIT has updated its Reproductive Health certification programs and extended the length of both the Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and Contraceptive Management courses to include prescribing competencies.

What is prescribing authority?

Prescribing authority allows eligible Certified Registered Nurses who have met BCCNM requirements to prescribe specific medications within their certification area and according to applicable Decision Support Tools (DSTs), standards, limits, and conditions.

Who is eligible to prescribe?

Certified Registered Nurses in approved certification streams, including Reproductive Health (STI and/or Contraceptive Management), may be eligible to prescribe if they have completed the BCCNM-recognized education requirements and meet all applicable standards and requirements.

I am already certified in STI. Do I automatically receive prescribing authority?

No. Existing RN(C)s do not automatically gain prescribing authority.

Nurses who completed their STI certification before prescribing competencies were incorporated into the course must complete additional BCCNM-recognized education requirements before obtaining prescribing authority.

I am already an RN(C). How do I add prescribing authority to my practice?

Current RN(C)s who wish to add prescribing authority must complete the [Safe Prescribing for Registered Nurses with Certified Practice](#) course offered by the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), in addition to meeting all other BCCNM requirements.

Can I take only the prescribing component from the BCCDC or BCIT course?

No. The prescribing content offered through BCCDC or BCIT is not available as a standalone module.

Prescribing competencies are integrated throughout the certification programs and cannot be taken separately.

Can I retake the STI certification course to gain prescribing authority?

Yes. Current RN(C)s may choose to complete the entire updated STI Certification Course as a refresher or because they have been away from clinical practice.

If the entire updated course is successfully completed, the nurse would meet the educational requirements associated with prescribing authority within the STI certification stream.

Partial completion of the course or completion of only selected modules is not sufficient.

Does this change apply only to STI certification?

No. BCIT has incorporated prescribing competencies into both its **STI** and **Contraceptive Management** certification programs. The revised BCCNM Reproductive Health practice standard recognizes both courses as meeting prescribing education requirements.

Why were the courses extended?

The courses were lengthened to accommodate the additional education, clinical decision-making, medication management, and competency requirements associated with safe prescribing practice.

What medications can RN(C)s prescribe?

RN(C)s with prescribing authority can only prescribe medications that are:

- Permitted within their certification area;
- Included in the applicable Decision Support Tools (DSTs);
- Consistent with BCCNM standards, limits and conditions;

- Within organizational policies; and
- Within the nurse's individual competence.

Prescribing authority **does not** permit RN(C)s to prescribe any medication they believe is appropriate. Prescribing is limited to the specific medications and indications outlined in the DSTs for their certification area.

Can you provide some examples?

STI Certification

An RN(C) certified in STI management may prescribe medications included in the [Certified STI DSTs](#), such as nitrofurantoin for UTI or doxycycline for chlamydia.

However, that same nurse **cannot** prescribe medications that fall outside the STI certification area, such as antihypertensives, diabetes medications, asthma medications, or antibiotics for unrelated conditions. This includes prescriptions for STIs and conditions that are not certified e.g. HSV or LGV.

Contraceptive Management

An RN(C) certified in Contraceptive Management may prescribe contraceptive methods and related medications that are included in the contraceptive management DSTs and within their scope.

They could not prescribe medications for conditions outside that certification area unless they hold the appropriate additional certification and authority.

Does obtaining prescribing authority expand my certification scope?

Prescribing authority allows RN(C)s to prescribe medications **within their existing certification area**. It does not expand the conditions they are authorized to assess, diagnose, or manage beyond the scope of their certification and applicable DSTs.

When does this change take effect?

For the BCCDC STI Certification Course, the new curriculum including prescribing competencies will be implemented beginning with the **Fall 2026 cohort**.

BCIT courses that include prescribing competencies were approved by BCCNM in March 2026, and recognition of those courses took effect following approval of the revised Reproductive Health practice standard in June 2026.

Where can I learn more?

[BCCNM Certified Registered Nurses: Prescribing Standard](#)

[BCCNM Announcement: Revised Standard Approved for RNs Certified in Reproductive Health](#)

[UNBC Safe Prescribing for Registered Nurses with Certified Practice](#)

[BCCDC STI Certification Online Course](#)

[BCIT Reproductive Health Certification Course](#)