

# A national occupational classification code for infection prevention and control professionals in Canada

Heather L. Candon, MSc, MHM, CIC<sup>1\*</sup>, Lorraine Maze dit Mieusement, RN, MN, CIC<sup>1</sup>, Bois Marufov, MD, MSc, CIC<sup>1</sup>, Murtuza Diwan, BSc, DLSHTM, MSc, CIC<sup>1</sup>, Maryam Salaripour, BSc, MPH, PhD<sup>1</sup>, Zahir Hirji, BScN, MHSc, RN CIC<sup>1</sup>, Kevin J. Stinson, PhD, CIC, RMCCM<sup>1</sup>, Lisa Mills, RN, BScN, CIC<sup>1</sup>, Erika Vitale, MPH, BSc, MLT, CIC<sup>1</sup>, and Karen Greenfield, RN, CIC<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Infection Prevention and Control Professionals of Ontario (IPACPrO), Canada

## \*Corresponding author

Heather L. Candon  
Sunnybrook  
2075 Bayview Ave  
Toronto, Ontario M4N 3M5  
Canada  
email: oicpacoalition@gmail.com

## Article history:

Received 17 February 2026  
Received in revised form 20 February 2026  
Accepted 5 March 2026

Canada's National Occupational Classification (NOC), governed and maintained by Statistics Canada, serves as the federal framework for collecting labour market data, supporting workforce planning, informing education and training investments, and enabling immigration and employment decision-making. Accurate classification within the NOC is, therefore, foundational to how professions are recognized, measured, and supported nationally.

At present, Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Professionals are not recognized as a distinct occupational group within the NOC. Instead, IPAC roles are a subcategory under the nursing classification. This approach fails to reflect the multidisciplinary composition and system-level scope of IPAC practice, and it no longer aligns with the reality of how IPAC work is performed across Canada, especially in Ontario.

Importantly, the objective of current advocacy efforts is not to remove IPAC nurses from their existing nursing NOC code. Nurses working in IPAC roles would continue to be appropriately classified under nursing. Rather, this initiative seeks the creation of a net-new standalone NOC unit group for IPAC Professionals, so that those from non-nursing backgrounds, such as public health, microbiology, epidemiology, laboratory science, other health sciences and international medical graduates, can be accurately classified based on the work they perform. NOC coding is determined by occupational function, not by original professional designation, and a new IPAC-specific code would allow all practitioners whose primary role is IPAC to be captured appropriately.

The current misclassification has tangible consequences. When IPAC Professionals are embedded within nursing data, the size, distribution, and trends of the IPAC workforce

cannot be accurately measured. This undermines workforce planning and limits the ability to forecast capacity needs. Misclassification also affects professional recognition, recruitment, and retention: employers struggle to benchmark IPAC roles appropriately; educational institutions lack clear occupational alignment for program development; and most critically, internationally trained IPAC Professionals encounter barriers when their work experience cannot be matched to an appropriate NOC code, despite performing the same core IPAC functions as their Canadian-trained peers. These barriers affect work permits, permanent residency pathways, and workforce integration. Recognizing these issues, the Infection Prevention and Control Professionals of Ontario (IPACPrO); formerly, Ontario Infection Control Professionals Action Coalition (OICPAC), a unified network of passionate IPAC Professionals dedicated to advocating for self-regulation and advancing the IPAC profession has developed and submitted a comprehensive proposal to Statistics Canada advocating for the creation of a standalone NOC unit group for IPAC Professionals. The proposal outlines IPAC's distinct scope of practice, core competencies, educational pathways, certification standards, and alignment with accreditation and legislative frameworks, and proposes classification under a new unit group (31205) titled *Infection Prevention and Control Professionals*.

The evidence supporting this request is substantial. IPAC Canada has established nationally recognized Practice Standards, Core Competencies, and Program Standards that define IPAC as a distinct professional practice across sectors (IPAC Canada, 2023; IPAC Canada, 2024c). Accreditation Canada requires healthcare organizations to maintain formal

**Conflicts of interest:** The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

IPAC programs and qualified expertise across acute care, long-term care, and community-based settings (Accreditation Canada, 2024).

Formal education pathways further demonstrate that IPAC is a mature and specialized profession. Canadian institutions such as Queen's University, the University of British Columbia, Humber College, Centennial College, Bay River College, and IPAC Canada offer IPAC-specific certificate and continuing education programs aligned with national competencies. Moreover, certification in Infection Control (CIC®) credential provides standardized validation of IPAC expertise independent of nursing licensure (CBIC, 2024).

Although the submission window for the NOC 2026 revision has closed, this work establishes a foundation for sustained federal engagement. IPACPrO is actively seeking letters of support from educational institutions and from the IPAC Canada Board of Directors to demonstrate national alignment and professional consensus.

Accurate occupational classification underpins professional recognition, labour statistics, funding eligibility, and health system preparedness. The creation of a standalone NOC classification for IPAC Professionals is an essential step toward ensuring that our profession is visible, measurable, and valued within Canada's health system. We urge IPAC Professionals, educators, and leaders across the country to engage in this effort and support a unified national approach to NOC reform.

## REFERENCES

- Accreditation Canada. (2024). *Infection prevention and control standards*. <https://accreditation.ca/standards/>
- Candon, H., Marufov, B., Houston, K., Maze dit Mieusement, L., Diwan, M., Salaripour, M., Hirji, Z., Stinson, K., & Mills, L. (2025). The case for professional regulation of infection prevention and control professionals in Ontario, Canada. *Canadian Journal of Infection Control*, 40(3), 121–123.
- Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology. (2024). *Certification in infection control (CIC®) handbook*. <https://www.cbic.org/CBIC/PDFs/2026-Candidate-Handbook-2.4.26.pdf>
- Ontario Government. (2021). *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, S.O. 2021, c. 39, Sched. 1*. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/21f39>
- IPAC Canada. (2022). *Practice standards and core competencies for infection prevention and control professionals*. [https://ipac-canada.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/IPAC\\_CoreCompetencies\\_ICPs\\_2022\\_revised-1.pdf](https://ipac-canada.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/IPAC_CoreCompetencies_ICPs_2022_revised-1.pdf)
- IPAC Canada. (2024). *Infection prevention and control (IPAC) program standard*. [https://ipac-canada.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/IPACCanada\\_ProgramStandards\\_2024\\_12\\_30\\_revised.pdf](https://ipac-canada.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/IPACCanada_ProgramStandards_2024_12_30_revised.pdf)
- IPAC Canada. (2025). *Essential infection prevention and control courses (acute care and long-term care)*. <https://ipac-canada.org/education-institute/ipac-canada-essentials-in-ipac-courses/>
- Queen's University. (2025). *Infection prevention & control online professional development course*. <https://healthsci.queensu.ca/opdes/cpd/educational-programs-opportunities/infection-prevention-control-online-course>
- Statistics Canada. (2021). *Introduction to the National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2021 Version 1.0*. <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects/standard/noc/2021/introductionV1#a2> 