

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE I

This is beginning level professional nursing work in providing primary, preventive, and rehabilitative care to individuals and families in a Public Health program. Employees demonstrate and implement techniques of nursing care and counsel for promotion of health and prevention of disease in clinics and other standard settings within an assigned area. Work involves considerable contact with other community agencies, and at times direct oversight of non-professional staff (e.g. clerical, community health assistant, interpreter, etc). In addition to providing direct patient care, employees must be able to collect and report basic patient data, and be aware of the uses and misuses of health data. Employees will generally serve at the staff nurse level in clinics or similar settings where there is higher-level staff available for consultation (direct eyes-on supervision is not required). In small agencies, an individual employee might be assigned to a variety of different clinics at different times; in larger agencies, the employee might be assigned permanently to a particular clinic or set of clinics. Employees might, on a regular or occasional basis, be assigned to an outreach clinic assignment that is similar to their regular in-house assignment. Employees are expected to participate in program or agency-wide planning and quality assurance activities. In this capacity, they will contribute observations or data related to patient or community trends or practices, ideas for improved program performance, and will participate in record audits and other program reviews. Employees will participate in Public Health Preparedness activities as directed by agency management. They will usually be expected to perform staff nursing duties in the event of a natural or induced disaster or in related practice drills.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope - Work is performed in clinics and other standard settings in an assigned area; employees assess patient needs, provide nursing interventions according to established protocols, explain medical provider's findings, determine whether there are barriers to obtaining care or following a plan of care, and assist the patient with alternatives if necessary. Work might include oversight of non-professional staff.

Intricacy - Work processes are related and understood. Based on nursing assessment, knowledge of work, patient input, and medical provider's instructions or prescription, employees provide care as appropriate, and make referrals to other community or professional groups as needed.

Subject Matter Complexity - Work requires a basic understanding of public health concepts, nursing theory and practice.

Guidelines – The North Carolina Nurse Practice Act, public health nursing standards, clinic protocols, agency work standards and program protocols. Work requires a basic level of professional judgment. Staff at this level are expected to have higher-level staff to consult with during most of their work assignment (higher-level staff do not have to be physically present at all times).

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions - Daily and weekly work is usually performed in an assigned clinic area, or in another setting where work is overseen by a higher level nurse. Agency goals and patient care goals are understood; the employees can make short range changes in patient care plans as needed, usually based on established protocols.

Nature of Review - Work is reviewed frequently for adherence to established public health nursing standards by a higher level nurse or nurse supervisor through review of patient chart documentation, written reports, and during oral conferences. Unusual situations are usually discussed with the supervisor, charge nurse, or team leader.

Scope of Decisions - Employees' work and decision-making have a direct effect on the client population served.

Consequence of Decisions - Employees' work and decision-making could have a substantial impact on the client population served, because employees are often responsible for initial patient assessment and appropriate teaching. Employees may be responsible for overseeing the work of non-professional staff during clinic sessions.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts - Employees have contact with a patient population in an assigned area which may not be familiar with public health standards and programs. Communication with patients must demonstrate sensitivity to the person's culture, economic challenges, and other vulnerabilities, and must also recognize each patient's strengths and abilities.

Nature and Purpose - Work requires that employees work in cooperation with the patient and other clinic staff to assess the patient's health status and needs that can be addressed in the clinic and assist in providing the services the patient needs to maintain or improve their health. Patient education and counseling are important components of this service delivery. The employee in this position must also be aware of health trends and practices that are pertinent to the population of patients served.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Hazards - Employees will be generally stationed in clinics or similar settings. They might be exposed to bloodborne pathogens, infectious diseases, angry or disruptive patients

Work Conditions - These will vary according to the clinic setting. Clinics are often over-crowded and noisy.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities - Basic knowledge of, and skill in, the application of nursing theory, principles, and techniques employed in the field of public health and related programs; understanding of best practices, safety standards, and therapeutic outcomes related to the specific area(s) of practice; working knowledge of current social and economic problems relating to public health, including health disparities; working knowledge of available resources and organizations; ability to deal tactfully with others and to exercise good judgment in appraising situations and making decisions; ability to work in partnership with patients and with other service providers to elicit needed information and to maintain effective working relationships; ability to accurately record services rendered and to interpret and explain records, reports and medical instructions; some ability to oversee the work of others; adequate computer skills to allow communication, patient record documentation, accessing information.

Minimum Education and Experience – Graduation from a four-year college or university with a B.S. in Nursing which includes a Public Health Nursing rotation, or Master's in Public Health and graduation from a school of professional nursing; or graduation from a school of professional nursing and one year of professional nursing experience; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.

Minimum Education and Experience for a Trainee Appointment - Graduation from an accredited school of professional nursing.

Necessary Special Qualifications - A current license to practice as a Registered Nurse in North Carolina by the North Carolina Board of Nursing.

Administering the Class - Individuals employed in a local Health Department without a B.S. Degree which includes a Public Health Nursing rotation or a Master's in Public Health, will be required to complete the "Introduction to Principles and Practices of Public Health Nursing" course within one year of employment as a condition of continued employment in accordance with Health Services Commission Rule.

Special Note - This is a generalized representation of positions in this class and is not intended to identify essential functions per ADA. Examples of work are primarily essential functions of the majority of positions in this class, but may not be applicable to all positions.