



Class Summary

The Public Health Nurse works in a variety of settings including patient homes, clinics, schools, health and human service agencies, and the general community to provide public health services to individuals, families, community groups, health and human service personnel and the community at large.

Distinguishing Characteristics

This is a single-level classification within the Nursing series. Nursing actions are directed toward the goals of prevention, assessment, risk reduction and health status improvement for individuals, families and communities. Nursing activities include, but are not limited to, systematic analysis of health data, care plan development, health education and advocacy, and coalition building and collaborating with community partners to promote the health of a population. Public Health Nurses often collaborate and consult within multidisciplinary and multi-agency teams in order to achieve desirable outcomes for families and communities. Public Health Nursing interventions occur at individual, family, community and system levels depending upon the responsibilities of the position and the issues involved.

The practice focus of the Public Health Nurse (PHN) is distinguished from that of the Registered Nurse, Advanced Practice Nurse Specialist (APNS) and the Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP) in that the Public Health Nurse provides services at the family and local community levels. The Registered Nurse (RN) makes assessments at the individual level; the APNS functions more broadly at a systems, community, organizational and policy level; and the ARNP has advanced licensure, training and experience in the provision of individual primary and specialty medical care.

Examples of Duties (May vary by position)

1. Performs comprehensive individual and family assessments which include health history, physical assessment, growth monitoring, developmental assessment, psycho-social assessment, assessment of family functioning, assessment for substance abuse or domestic violence issues, and assessment of basic needs including food, housing, income, resources and supports, and access to health care.
2. Provides case management, care coordination, referral and follow-up to individuals and families who are members of a vulnerable population and/or high-risk group. Evaluates outcomes, effectiveness of plan, and makes changes as necessary on micro and macro levels. In community outreach uses epidemiological surveillance methods, screening, and case findings of communicable and infectious diseases that threaten the health of the community.
3. Engages clients and families in a plan of care that addresses their identified health deficits and issues. Provides education and counseling to individuals, families and community groups that are adapted to their unique needs, lifestyle, cultural and socio-economic situation.
4. Participates in community assessment; can distinguish between quantitative and qualitative community assessment data; understands incidence and prevalence data; knows how to access basic community epidemiological data.
5. Provides leadership and acts as a liaison with other community agencies and professionals; advocates on behalf of vulnerable individuals and populations; participates in assessing and

evaluating health care services to ensure that people are informed of available programs and services and are assisted in the utilization of those services.

6. Demonstrates support of Public Health's mission to protect and promote the health of all residents through implementing primary prevention strategies which prevent health problems from starting, spreading, or progressing.
7. Obtains and completes appropriate patient "Consent for Care" forms, ensures patient confidentiality and maintains orderly medical records. Follows established Public Health medical records policies and procedures as well as the State and Federal laws that govern the release of health care information.
8. Documents patient assessment and intervention data in medical records. Uses established medical record forms and documentation practices.
9. Provides training, orientation and education to staff, students and other health and human service professionals in the community regarding public health practices.
10. Delegates and supervises tasks assigned to paraprofessional staff.
11. Responds to emergency situations with basic life support and first aid skills. Summons other health care providers and emergency response personnel in a timely and appropriate manner.
12. Participates in research and demonstration projects that seek to improve the health of communities and determine new ways to address health issues.
13. Participates in program development, implementation, coordination and support; may facilitate multidisciplinary and/or interagency teams.
14. Participates in quality management activities using quality improvement and evaluation approaches.
15. Ensures compliance with practice guidelines, community standards of care, and Federal and State laws and regulations. Ensures a safe working environment by adhering to the standards set by Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Washington Industrial Safety and Health Administration (OSHA/WISHA).
16. Participates in Department and possibly community emergency response training and drills in support of disaster preparedness. Maintains home preparedness to respond in the case of a disaster.
17. Assumes responsibility for own professional growth and development by pursuing education, participating in professional committees and work groups, and contributing to a work environment where continual improvements in practice are pursued.
18. Perform other duties as assigned.

Knowledge/Skills (May vary by position)

Knowledge of current Public Health nursing principles and processes

Knowledge of anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, epidemiology, physical assessment and basic pharmacology

Knowledge of human systems (wellness, illness, growth and development, basic nutrition, human behavior, psychosocial development, family and community systems)

Knowledge of prescribed treatments and medical interventions; ability to effectively monitor and document the patient's treatment progress and response; ability to refer to appropriate providers as indicated

Knowledge of health care technology, equipment, supplies and materials needed for medical treatment

Knowledge of chart documentation requirements, medical record forms, State and Federal laws that govern release of health care information, patient consent

Knowledge of population-based health status indicators, determinants of health and illness, factors contributing to health promotion and disease prevention, and factors influencing the use of health services

Knowledge of and the ability to apply OSHA/WISHA standards

Knowledge of health care systems structure and function; ability to make appropriate client referrals based upon patient need, program guidelines and community resources

Knowledge of current epidemiological data analysis and surveillance methods used in the management of communicable and infectious disease

Knowledge of Washington State law relating to nursing care (WAC 18.79), federal health care regulations, Nurse Practice guidelines, Patient Bill of Rights, and clinical practice guidelines for patient care; understanding of community standards

Knowledge of adult learning and health education techniques and principles including: reproductive health education, related services information, option counseling and emergency contraception services

Knowledge of group processes including facilitation, collaboration, negotiation and conflict resolution

Knowledge of research techniques and principles *as well as quality assurance/improvement systems*

Knowledge of emergency preparedness—at home, work and in the community

Skill in initiating appropriate emergency response

Understanding of incident command structure

Skill in using a systematic approach to client care that includes assessment, diagnosis, planning, intervention, evaluation, consultation, referral and follow up

Skills in maintaining working relationships with diverse populations and cultures; ability to engage clients and families in a care plan

Skill in case management; ability to provide option counseling and referral for terminations

Skill in working collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams to improve patient outcomes

Communication skills (oral/written and active listening)

Skill in using information management systems

Skill in time management, problem solving, multiple tasking, prioritizing, crisis intervention and medical care coordination

Knowledge of the leadership skills required to delegate tasks, coordinate patient and family care, and mobilize community resources

Licensing, Certification and Other Requirements

Current Washington State Registered Nurse license

Bachelor's degree in nursing science from a school of nursing accredited by the National League of Nursing or the equivalent

Supplemental Information

Washington State Driver's License or the ability to provide transportation to work locations with limited or no public transportation services may be required.

Offers for employment in this classification are contingent upon successful completion of a background check and medical examination.

Additional licenses, certifications and other requirements determined to be necessary to meet the business needs of the employing unit may be required.

FLSA Designation	Exempt (Professional)
Levels within same series	None
Class History	Created Updated 10/2003 Updated 1/2008 Changed font and format