

Competence in Public Health Nurse Practice: What it takes to be proficient in a small, full-service health department.

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County Health Department

- New PH Nursing Director in the door
- 100 years nursing experience out the door
- Public health nursing
- Home care nursing
- Communicable disease
- Bioterrorism (Top Off)
- Grants, clinics etc.



Cape May County NJ

- 100,000 year round residents
- 600,000 + in the spring, summer & fall
- 21,000 + uninsured
- Seasonal economy
- 1 hospital
- Few resources for uninsured
- Few organizations with capacity



County Health Department

■ Clinic Services

- Cancer Screening
- Family Planning
- Child Health
- STD
- TB
- Diabetes, Hypertension and Lipids
- Flu/Pneumonia vaccine clinics
- Employee Vaccines

■ Other

- Special Child Health/Early Intervention
- Homecare
- Bioterrorism
- Communicable Disease Investigation
- School/daycare audits
- Outreach/Education
- Community resource
- Consult lead, environmental issues



Nursing in Cape May

- Nurses spread across funding streams
- Under performing home care department
- Poor morale
- It is what it is!
- Division operations under scrutiny
- Clinic cancellations
- Bioterrorism prep expectations
- Staff vacancies



Reality

- Communicable diseases spread across staff
- All staff assigned home care clients
- Some staff can work with kids
- Some staff can do STD's
- Designated family planning/CEED staff
- Less than Half of staff with BSN's
- Salaries terrible
- No BSN's applying



What to Do?

- Assess PH practice standards
- Review NJ state job descriptions
- Compare college syllabus with PHN services as defined in practice standards
- Re-engineer Nursing Division



Public Health Practice Standards for Local Boards of Health in NJ

- Legislative law for public health practice in state of NJ
- Assure the provision of a modern and manageable array of public health services
- Protect and promote physical and mental health and prevent disease, injury, and disability



Public Health Nurse Definition

- Uses knowledge from nursing, social, and public health sciences to promote and protect the health of populations
- PH nursing practice provides the core PH functions and the delivery of the 10 essential PH services
- Comprehensive PH nursing services that provide integrated support to the daily operation of the PH agency



Qualifications

- Baccalaureate degree in nursing---PHN
- Current license
- Minimum of one year experience in public health or working with a preceptor or local resource person and
- Complete a course in population-based public health nursing within one year of employment

- Associate degree in nursing---Graduate Nurse--PH
- Current license
- Minimum of one year experience in public health or working with a preceptor or local resource person and
- Complete a course in population-based public health nursing within one year of employment



Education Requirements

- BSN
 - Association of community health educators
 - Quad council
 - NJ dept. Of Personnel
 - Allows for a “graduate “ PHN for RN’s with less than a BSN
- MSN
 - ANA-Clinical nurse specialist
Public/Community Health Nurse



Graduate Nurse vs. PHN

- Under close supervision, provides professional nursing services for a PH agency in the home, school, clinic, or health center
- Under direction, teaches, counsels, conducts epidemiological investigations, and provides PH nursing services in homes, clinics and schools to individuals and families in the community for a PH agency. Promotes, protects the health of populations through performance of core PH functions and delivery of core PH functions.



Core Public Health Functions

- Assessment
- Assurance—achieve agreed upon goals by encouraging the actions of public or private entities, by requiring such actions through ordinance, or by providing direct service
- Policy development—set of comprehensive public health laws, methods and guidelines which are based on scientific knowledge



10 Essential Services

- Monitor health status to identify community health problems
- Diagnose and investigate health problems
- Inform, educate, and empower people regarding health issues
- Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems
- Develop policies and plans supportive of individual and community health efforts
- Enforce the laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
- Link people to needed personal health services and assure health care when it is otherwise unavailable
- Ensure a competent local public health system and assure a competent personal health care workforce
- Evaluate the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services
- Research for innovative solutions to health problems



PHN Practice Standards

Academic Objectives

- Assessing and identifying populations at risk
- Providing outreach and case finding using population-based services
- Using systematic, relevant data collection from PH nursing practice for community health assessment
- Using case information and epidemiological methods to link epidemiology and a clinical understanding of health and illness
- Developing and implementing health guidance, counseling, and educational plans using the nursing process

- ✦ Use the nursing process and critical thinking to assess health status and health potential; Plan, implement and evaluate nursing care for individuals, families and aggregates in the community system..
- ✦ Synthesize concepts of public health and the social and behavioral sciences with community health nursing practice when working with various client systems.
- ✦ Perform and monitor therapeutic nursing interventions that are evidence based in nursing and epidemiological research methods.
- ✦ Implement leadership skills through interaction with consumers and providers when meeting health needs and nursing goals in the community.



PHN Practice Standards

- Participating in all components of communicable disease prevention and control, including clinical surveillance, case identification, and treatment
- Providing health plans to assure health promotion efforts that include primary clinical prevention and early intervention strategies
- Using the nursing process and triage to determine priorities for interventions and services based on risk assessment and community needs especially for underserved populations

Academic Objectives

- Develop and evaluate plans for improved health care delivery to selected client systems from diverse population groups with emphases on differences as well as similarities related to race, ethnicity, gender and social class.
- Assume the roles of care-giver, educator, client advocate and political activist for consumers and targeted providers of health care within community settings.



PHN Practice Standards

- Planning, developing, and initiating interdisciplinary nursing plans for care and case management
- Establishing and maintaining written procedures and protocols for clinical care
- Identifying, defining, coordinating, and evaluating enhanced services for complex populations

Academic Objectives

- Incorporate concepts of human diversity when implementing and evaluating therapeutic nursing interventions
- Use system theory through Neuman's nursing model throughout the nursing process to assist individuals, families, and aggregates across the life-span, on all levels of the wellness/illness continuum whose subsystems are either threatened or penetrated by environmental stressors accomplish reconstitution and maximize their potential for health.



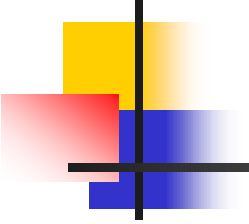
PHN Practice Standards

- Advocating policies and funding that create clinical programs and improve health status
- Establishing procedures and processes which ensure competent implementation of preventive measures and treatment schedules
- Provide clinical preventive services, including clinical screenings and preventive care
- Facilitating access to care through the use of nursing assessment, referral for risk reduction, prevention, restorative, and rehabilitative services, and establishing clinical programs and services

Academic Objectives

- Accept responsibility and accountability for professional nursing intervention within an ethical framework in the community for nursing interventions and outcomes.
- Demonstrate effective use of all communication skills when collaborating with health professionals and consumers seeking solutions to complex health perturbations.

Conclusions

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- Disconnect-- Missing components in academia
 - Outreach
 - Case-finding
 - Data collection
 - Prevention
 - Funding
 - Access
 - Communicable disease control/surveillance
 - Underserved



Conclusions cont.'

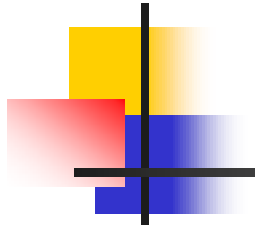
- Disconnect- Missing components in PHN standards
 - Political activist
 - Leadership skills
 - Human diversity
 - Critical thinking
 - Collaboration
 - Environmental stressors
 - Life-span, illness/wellness continuum perspective
 - System theory
 - Ethical framework



Conclusion

- Disconnect between PHN expectations and academic preparation
- BSN syllabus on the right track
- Concern that all objectives can be accomplished in time frame
- Knowledge base so broad
- Extraordinary skill set

Future



- BSN minimum preparation for PHN
- Work on disconnect between PHN Practice standards/ Academic Objectives
- Utilize health departments as clinical sites
- Solicit “real world” advice in curriculum development
- Integrate PHN throughout RN curriculum
- Structured orientation for new PHN’s
- Preceptors/mentors
- Incorporate time for training in PHN schedule
- Quad Council/ANA/ ASTDN/NACCHO continue work on competencies