

Core Competencies for the Nurse, Practical Nurse and Nursing Assistive Personnel

Developed by
Oregon Nurse Leadership Council Education Committee:

Preamble

This document outlines a set of competencies for the three levels of nursing personnel, the nurse, the practical nurse, and nursing assistive personnel. These competencies were established through a three part process: 1) collaboration among representatives from stakeholders in nursing (workforce, educational programs at all levels both private and public, and the Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN)); 2) a thorough review and synthesis of the literature relative to the nursing shortage and competency development; and 3) a re-validation of the competencies with subject matter and practice experts from each of the stakeholder groups.

GOALS:

- **Use a common definition of nursing to provide the framework for articulation of the nursing competencies required by all levels of nursing.** Definition of nursing: The ONLC education subcommittee saw as its first step the need to agree to a common definition of nursing. This definition was agreed to as follows: The mission of nursing is to improve health through enhancing the self-care capacity of individuals and families, and the organizational and community conditions essential to it. *The unique function of the nurse is to assist the individual, sick or well, in the performance of those activities contributing to health or its recovery (or to a peaceful death) that he would perform unaided if he had the necessary strength, will, or knowledge and to do this in such a way as to help him gain independence (Henderson 1968).* The nurse achieves this mission through attention to relationship, a deep understanding of the care experience, and the exercise of skilled clinical judgment in the application of nursing science and art.
- **Articulate the competencies for nursing at all levels within Oregon health care systems today and over the next decade.** The grid outlined below provides a side by side analysis of the competencies for all three levels of nursing. Although these competencies were developed separately and through intensive dialogue with the various stakeholder groups, this comparison is provided for ease of interpretation. The different levels of nursing, including the nurse, the practical nurse, and nursing assistive personnel, are shown side by side but are not intended to be construed as a ladder formation as seen in traditional educational models. These competencies are not stepwise in nature and are not intended to be subsumed, as each progressive step becomes more complex. The competencies are intended to be separate and distinct, yet complimentary to each other.

- **Use these competencies to guide the structure and outcome of the education of the registered nurse, practical nurse, and associated assistive personnel throughout the state.**

Process for Competency Document Development:

The Competencies: The ONLC education subcommittee derived the framework for its competencies from The Future Competencies Matrix developed by Pew and “Colleagues in Caring” of South Carolina (O’Neil, 1998). The members of this task force carefully read these competencies and their accompanying outcomes and edited them to feature integrated competencies in direct relationship to the articulated needs of our population in Oregon. The competencies outlined in this document are derived from analyses of the current and the predicted future health care needs of the community, the expected health workforce demands, and the healthcare needs of Oregonians in the immediate future. They are organized into 4 major categories: overall professional competencies, applied clinical competencies, applied organizational competencies, and applied community competencies. The process included:

- Review of assumptions, values and definitions about nursing and nursing education articulated at a retreat held on November 29-30, 2001. This process included a clarification of the paradigm shift in thinking that needed to occur relative to the future functions of the nurse (including all levels of preparation for the regulatory title of Registered Nurse), the practical nurse (currently regulated as the Licensed Practical Nurse), and assistive personnel (including the Certified Nursing Assistant and all others who provide nursing care under licensed or non-licensed caregiver titles).
- Affirmation of our belief that (1) in the state of Oregon, Associate degree and Baccalaureate degree nursing education has moved closer together in content and time required to complete the education, and (2) that at the present time, most Oregon employers of RNs do not organize or define work roles and practice with significant differentiation based on basic educational preparation.
- Development of nursing competencies that reflect the needs and unique requirements of the communities of the state of Oregon.
- Review of national and international models of competency from the literature gathered and presented at earlier meetings (see references).

Oregon Nurse Leadership Council (ONLC) Education Committee

Registered Nurse (RN), Practical Nurse (PN), and Nursing Assistive Personnel (NAP) Competency Comparison

RN Competency	PN Competency	NAP Competency
To assure enhancement of the self-care capacity of individuals and families, and the organizational and community conditions essential to it, the registered nurse will have the following competencies:	To assure that the patient's needs for nursing care are met in a safe and effective manner, the practical nurse will have the following competencies:	To assure that nursing needs are met in a safe and effective manner, the nursing assistant will be accountable to a licensed nurse either through direct supervision or through assignment and delegation as defined by the Board of Nursing and will have the following competencies:
I. Overall Professional Competencies		
<p>I.A. Demonstrate a personal commitment to service and to socially relevant practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a sustained commitment to improving the health of individuals and constituencies. • Initiate and participate in partnerships to provide health care services to people who need them. 	<p>I.A. Demonstrate a personal commitment to service and the profession of nursing.</p>	<p>I.A. Demonstrate personal behaviors consistent with the value system of nursing.</p>
<p>I.B. Demonstrate ethical and legal behavior in all professional activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as an advocate for individuals, groups and communities. • Demonstrate accountability for own ethical behavior and for delegated actions. 	<p>I.B. Demonstrate ethical and legal behavior in nursing practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to the nursing code of ethics. • Practice nursing within the full scope and legal boundaries of licensed practical nursing. • Respect the privacy and dignity of individuals and families. 	<p>I.B. Demonstrate ethical and legal behavior in the work environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain client confidentiality. • Respect the rights and property of clients and co-workers. • Report signs of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, misappropriation or exploitation.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze complex nursing care dilemmas using legal and ethical principles of the nursing profession as guidance. Demonstrate accountability to the community for the nursing profession's ethical practice. Demonstrate understanding of the ongoing relationship and tension between individual and social well being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the individual/family's needs. Be responsible and accountable for competent job performance. Articulate personal and professional values, and use them in clinical decision making and professional behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be responsible and accountable for competent job performance.
<p>I.C. Demonstrate critical thinking, reflection, and problem solving skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply analytical reasoning, reflection and rational problem-solving skills, using verifiable information, and clinical judgment, in order to choose among alternative solutions to clinical problems. Engage in self-reflection and dialogue with colleagues regarding nursing practice. Create alternative solutions to clinical problems. Demonstrate the ability to analyze, synthesize and utilize data to provide optimal nursing care. 	<p>I.C. Apply logic and problem solving skills when implementing the plan of care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify problems in provision of care, which require further intervention. Seek consultation when problems extend beyond the defined scope of practice, standards and personal competence. 	<p>I.C. Identify and report problems to the licensed nurse when needed interventions extend beyond authorized duties, standards and personal competence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect, record and report accurate data about client condition. Measure vital signs. Observe and report objective signs. Record and report subjective symptoms. Seek clarification when problems or observations are unclear. Report interventions to the licensed nurse.
<p>I.D. Provide culturally sensitive care across the lifespan to a diverse society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for the interpretive needs of 	<p>I.D Provide culturally sensitive care across the lifespan to individuals within a diverse society.</p>	<p>I.D Provide culturally sensitive care to individuals within the community as reflected in the care plan.</p>

RN Competency	PN Competency	NAP Competency
<p>individuals and groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use knowledge of cultural differences to collaborate with individuals and communities to provide health care that is sensitive to and consistent with cultural values, beliefs, and customs. • Provide culturally sensitive teaching materials to individuals, families, and groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the influence of one's own culture. • Demonstrate awareness of one's own values and beliefs regarding diversity. • Provide care that is sensitive and consistent with the cultural values, beliefs and customs of the individual. • Ensure communication assistance is available for non-English speaking or hearing/speech impaired individuals and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide care that is sensitive and consistent with the cultural values, beliefs and customs of the individual • Seek assistance for individuals and families who are non-English speaking or are hearing/speech impaired.
<p>I.E. Practice leadership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply management skills as a team leader to supervise and delegate care; promote shared goals to ensure positive care outcomes. • Adapt nursing practice to changing health care and management systems. • Use information from multiple sources in order to collaborate, negotiate, coordinate, delegate, and evaluate delivery of care. • Apply leadership skills: create synergy with other team members; organize, and evaluate the functioning of groups of individuals and staff. • Lead and facilitate change for individuals and groups • Demonstrate flexibility and willingness 	<p>I.E. Assist and collaborate with the RN to ensure safe, effective client care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign and supervise care provided by other assistive nursing personnel as appropriate. • Recognize and report situations in which assessment and intervention by the registered nurse is necessary. 	<p>I.E. Function as an assistant to the licensed nurse within guidelines and nursing care plans established by the RN.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept delegation and assignment within authorized duties of the CNA. • Communicate effectively with members of the health care team. • Manage own behavior effectively within the health care team.

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<p>to change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and act on opportunities for change in the health care setting. • Persist as an advocate for change when barriers or failures are encountered. • Demonstrate a commitment to thoughtful and attentive service to clients. • Use communication skills in the areas of writing, speaking and presenting as required to function effectively in leadership positions. • Recognize individual differences and the rich diversity and knowledge of the health care team. 		
<p>I.F. Practice preventive health care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as a role model for healthy behaviors, acknowledging when demonstrated behaviors fall outside the desired range. • Promote intentional self-care as a life long habit • Advocate for health education, healthy lifestyles, and early detection and treatment of disease. • Incorporate an understanding of the genetic, protective and predictive factors that influence the health of individuals, families and groups in 	<p>I.F. Apply established principles of health promotion and preventive health care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in gathering basic health screening information. • Teach basic health promotion/maintenance and self-care to individuals and families based on an established teaching plan. • Demonstrate good personal health care practices. 	<p>I.F. Apply established principles of health promotion and preventive health care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate good personal health care practices.

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<p>the provision of preventative health care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the need for, and implement risk reduction strategies to address health issues. • Assist individuals and groups to learn competent self care skills that promote and protect health. • Perform health screening and make appropriate referrals. • Develop personalized teaching plans for individuals and groups related to health promotion and disease prevention based on their state of readiness to know or to act. • Participate in initiatives that support community conditions conducive to healthy norms, practices and conditions. 		
<p>I.G. Use communication and information technology effectively and appropriately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access, evaluate and use data and information from a wide range of resources. • Demonstrate effective use of computer-based information and practice management systems for clinical decision support, the provision of care, continuous quality improvement, outcome evaluation and 	<p>I.G. Use communication and information technology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey ideas and information clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing. • Use information technology to monitor care and report changes to the RN. • Use information and communication technology to document clinical information. • Maintain appropriate privacy of the health care record and patient 	<p>I.G. Use information technology to communicate and document clinical information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the confidentiality of client information. • Use information technology to report changes to the licensed nurse.

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<p>professional development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use technology to make effective group presentations. • Adapt electronic information resources (Internet, CD-ROM, etc.) to educate individuals about health and disease management. • Contribute to the development of information systems that impact the provision of client care. • Teach individuals and groups about health care technologies and adapt the use of technology to meet client care and/or health education needs. 	<p>information regardless of means of storage.</p>	
<p>II. Applied Clinical Competencies</p>		
<p>II.A. Provide evidence-based, clinically competent nursing care in a culturally sensitive manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform comprehensive health, work and social history and physical exam for individuals, family, “like family”, caregivers and community groups, formulating nursing diagnosis, coordinating and managing care across the life span and within a variety of settings. • Advocate for vulnerable individuals and groups. • Perform and modify therapeutic and preventive nursing measures and 	<p>II.A. Provide clinically competent care through use of established standards and practice guidelines and by demonstrating the following behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice relationship-centered care with individuals and families. • Advocate for vulnerable individuals. • Establish effective and therapeutic communications with individuals and families. • Collect and report data regarding a client or family to the RN for use in designing the plan of care. • Recognize, record, and report psychological and physiological 	<p>II.A. Provide compassionate, sensitive personal care to clients within parameters established for safety, privacy, client rights and authorized duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain mobility and use assistive devices effectively. • Protect vulnerable individuals. • Facilitate good nutrition and hydration by assisting with feeding and fluid intake. • Assist clients with toileting and elimination. • Manage the environment for safety and therapeutic effectiveness. .

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<p>administer treatments and medications as authorized by law and determined by the State Board of Nursing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate theory and research-based knowledge from arts, humanities, and sciences for the direct and indirect delivery of patient care. • Participate in the research process and/or use interpreted research findings to plan and implement nursing care. • Relate assessment findings to underlying pathology or physiologic changes in the client's condition. • Develop, implement and evaluate effective and appropriate plan(s) of care, which are focused on the client based on efficacy, resources and other contextual factors. • Assist in the development of clinical practice guidelines to plan, implement and evaluate nursing care. • Focus and provide care appropriately by taking into account physiological, emotional, spiritual, psychosocial, cultural, economic, environmental, geographic, and political determinants of health when caring for individuals, and groups. (n) • Articulate the global environment in which health care is provided. 	<p>responses to treatment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform fundamental therapeutic and preventative nursing measures. • Administer treatments and medications. • Prioritize own nursing interventions when implementing the plan of care. 	

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<p>II.B. Practice relationship-centered care with individuals and families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply effective therapeutic & psychotherapeutic communication, integrating cultural differences in interactions with individuals, their families, caregivers, fellow health professionals, and others. • Demonstrate effective management of group process. • Effectively utilize negotiation and conflict management strategies • Engage individuals and families in reflecting on the meaning of health and illness experience in the context of their lives. • Facilitate others to improve communication skills within therapeutic and team relationships. 	<p>II.B. Use clear and effective therapeutic communication with clients, families, members of the healthcare team, and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt communication to the individual and to the situation. • Convey information (orally and in writing) in a manner that is appropriate, complete, succinct, and shows use of thought process. • Demonstrate basic conflict resolution skills. 	<p>II.B. Communicate effectively and respectfully with the client and family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt communication to the individual according to the care plan. • Report relevant information obtained from client and family to the licensed nurse. • Convey information clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing.
<p>II.C. Apply knowledge of the emerging sciences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate and assess the utilization of traditional and complementary health care practices. • Apply emerging scientific knowledge to initiate, change, and improve nursing practice. • Evaluate, on an ongoing basis, new scientific knowledge and advances as to their value to health care and, as 		

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<p>appropriate, transfer the knowledge into practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the ethical application of emerging sciences to health care practices. 		
<p>II.D. Apply and integrate principles of community health and population based care into practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use epidemiological, social, and environmental data to think critically about the health of individuals, families and groups. Use population-based information as the context for choosing appropriate treatment and care options at the individual and family level. 		
III. Applied Organizational Competencies		
<p>III.A. Apply concepts of resource utilization and systems integration to enhance care delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make decisions that are cost-effective in the use of health care resources. Use appropriate evaluation methods to analyze the quality of nursing care. Participate in research that focuses on the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of nursing interventions. Collaborate with individuals, and groups to consume health care resources in a competent, rational and 	<p>III.A. Apply concepts of resource utilization to practice cost-effective nursing care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate appropriate use of patient-care materials and supplies Effectively manage time of self and others to provide for required breaks and efficiency complete work with minimal use of overtime. 	<p>III.A. Plan ahead for patient needs in order to provide cost effective care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize wastage of supplies. Effectively manage time, taking required breaks and efficiently completing work to minimize use of overtime.

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<p>cost-effective manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver care that balances the conflict between individual, professional, system and society. 		
<p>III.B. Work in interdisciplinary teams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain effective working relationships in multiple settings as an integral member of the interdisciplinary team. • Work interdependently in carrying out roles and responsibilities to assure effective and efficient coordination of care. • Initiate referrals to appropriate departments and agencies to promote coordination and continuity of interdisciplinary care. • Demonstrate understanding of the case management resources available to proactively outreach to at-risk clients and their families. 	<p>III.B. Function as a member of the healthcare team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with other health care workers from diverse backgrounds. • Manage own behavior effectively as a member of the health care team and leader of assistive personnel. 	<p>III.B. Function as a member of the nursing care team.</p>
<p>III.C. Contribute to continuous improvement of the health care system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the knowledge and tools of continuous improvement in clinical practice to improve the delivery of health care. • Participate in the measurement of 	<p>III.C. Participate in quality improvement within the healthcare system or agency.</p>	<p>III.C. Participate in quality improvement within the healthcare system or agency.</p>

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outcomes of nursing care and overall care at the individual and aggregate level.		
IV. Applied Community Competencies		
<p>IV.A. Improve access to health care for the general population and for under-served groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify how health care delivery systems are organized and financed and the effects these systems play on the delivery and outcomes of health care. • Incorporate economic, legal and political factors that influence health care delivery when planning care. • Act as an advocate for individuals and groups with unmet health needs. • Identify the link between access to basic health services and health outcomes and the socioeconomic burden of illness. • Demonstrate fiscal accountability for one's own practice while providing quality care. 		
<p>IV.B. Partner with communities in health care decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote active involvement of individuals and groups in seeking and evaluating information and making decisions about their health and health 		

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<p>care based on their perceptions of quality, cost, and convenience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide individuals, families and groups with the information they need to consider available alternatives and make informed choices for themselves. • Describe the impact of the environment on issues of health and illness. • Participate in the development of partnerships to identify health promotion goals and strategies to meet these goals. Incorporate knowledge of environmental impact in planning for these partnerships. • Assist consumers as they access and interpret the meaning and validity of health information for themselves, their families, and their environment. 		

The use of these competencies:

These competencies are intended to serve as a foundation for curriculum development that will in turn produce nurses capable of caring for the needs of Oregonians into the future. It is intended that academic institutions, as well as the workplace, will use these competencies to guide the structure of education and delivery of care by the nurse, the practical nurse, and associated nursing assistive personnel throughout the state.

Conclusion:

The goal of the ONLC Education committee when preparing this document was to outline the competencies needed by a team of nursing professionals in order to meet the healthcare needs of Oregonians. It is based on a single definition of nursing and encompasses competencies for the nurse, practical nurse and nursing assistive personnel.

This document reflects our beliefs about the responsibility of the profession of nursing to the people of Oregon, and is based on current and anticipated future needs. It identifies that the nurse works with a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary team that can only function effectively if life-long learning and continued development of the team is seen to be the key to improved patient care. It also identifies the strongly held belief that competency-based nursing education will prepare the nurse of the future for practice in a world of healthcare that looks very different than today's environment. As such, these competencies are intended to promote an expectation of high quality educational outcomes focused on improved patient care, as well as a high degree of flexibility for students within the academic environment.

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