

Competencies for Nurses and Nurse Practitioners

This document is a set of competencies for practicing registered nurses and nurse practitioners. The literature is clear that registered nurse education programs do not include significant information about people with disabilities or how to promote the health, well being and autonomy of People with Disabilities (PWD). A recent survey (soon to be published) demonstrates that nurse practitioner programs do not adequately include this content either. Nurses who are ill prepared to care for PWD continue into nurse practitioners programs without much additional information about PWD. As nurses and nurse practitioners are an integral part of the primary care system in the United States, measurable outcome competencies for registered nurse and nurse practitioner programs are needed. The goal of developing these competencies is to ensure nursing education programs have measurable outcome competencies for registered nurses and for nurse practitioners at the completion of programs.

Goal - To improve care by nurses and nurse practitioners, including access and utilization of primary care services, to people with disabilities.

	Registered Nurse (RN)	Upon completion of Nurse Practitioner (NP) program, demonstrates knowledge, attitude, and skills of the practicing RN plus the following:
Knowledge	<p>PHYSIOLOGIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizes a conceptual framework of disability in the context of human diversity, health, illness, the lifespan, and the constructed social and cultural environments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex.: Biopsychosocial Model, Interface Model Recognizes PWD can have a high level of wellness Verbalizes the importance of health promotion activities Identifies actual and/or secondary conditions Describes common unmet health needs for PWD Acknowledges the importance of innovative or novel treatment and management strategies for clinical practice Bases practice on current evidence 	<p>PHYSIOLOGIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes disability and its impact on healthcare from the perspective of a framework or model accepted by the disability community Differentiates the difference between chronic and acute presentations in the PWD Differentiates between primary and secondary conditions related to disability Recognizes the interrelatedness of primary and secondary conditions Identifies health promotion activities; encourages PWD and family/caregiver participation Screens for common unmet health needs for PWD Explores PWD use of innovative or novel treatment and management strategies, including complementary and alternative methods. Provides evidence based guidance in evaluation of these therapies. Considers the changing needs of both PWD and the family (and caregiver/surrogate) based on their aging

	Registered Nurse (RN)	Upon completion of Nurse Practitioner (NP) program, demonstrates knowledge, attitude, and skills of the practicing RN plus the following:
Knowledge	<p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and acknowledges the importance of appropriate, patient specific communication and family/surrogate communication when PWD is incapable of communication even with communication aids <p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes the ethical and legal right for PWDs to access all environmental facilities and appropriate treatments based on principles of Universal Design Acknowledges the PWD perception of his/her experience during the provision of health care and the potential influence on future healthcare encounters Explores with PWD and family/surrogate prior healthcare experience. <p>REFERRAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to meet all PWD needs 	<p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies the preferred method of communication of the PWD. Communicates with the family/surrogate when PWD is incapable of understanding or communicating even with communication aids Screens PWD for need and potential need for alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) Utilizes AAC methods appropriately <p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipates and identifies actual and/or potential barriers to providing optimum health care to the PWD consistent with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Provides healthcare incorporating PWD and family/surrogate input regarding his/her experiences Identifies areas of strengths and areas for improvement for the provision of health care based on PWD and family/surrogate input Identifies areas of strengths and areas for improvement for the provision of health care for PWD based on health team member input Explores prior healthcare experience and potential impact on seeking healthcare <p>REFERRAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies appropriate referrals to meet physiologic, psychosocial, medical, and healthcare needs of the PWD and facilitates referrals related to acquisition of services and equipment Demonstrates knowledge of assistive devices and relevant services that would improve quality of life for PWD Provides periodic evaluation of assistive and communication devices

	Registered Nurse (RN)	Upon completion of Nurse Practitioner (NP) program, demonstrates knowledge, attitude, and skills of the practicing RN plus the following:
Attitudes	<p>PHYSIOLOGIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and applies legal and ethical principles to provide optimum healthcare to PWD Recognizes the potential for attitudinal barriers towards PWD <p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizes general principles and etiquette for interacting with PWD and/or family or surrogate Demonstrates respect in interaction with PWD Communicates directly with PWD Understands that disability affects the PWD, family, and social contacts Recognizes the need for greater understanding of the experience of PWD Obtains information from PWD, caretaker, or surrogate and other health team members to increase greater understanding of the experience of PWD <p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands that PWD have unique needs for access to the provision of optimum health care Describes the roles and responsibilities within the PWD's circle of support <p>REFERRAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands and respects the need for an interdisciplinary approach to meet all of the physiologic, psychosocial, and medical needs for PWD as determined by the PWD with the NP 	<p>PHYSIOLOGIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies own or others' actual or potential attitudinal barriers to optimum health care for PWD Identifies strategies to overcome/address own or others' actual or potential attitudinal barriers to the provision of optimum health, including access to intensive care, life-sustaining treatment, and palliative and end-of-life care <p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates with the PWD based on the respect for the person as an individual as well the right of the PWD to make informed decisions for health care, and communicates with family/surrogate when the patient lacks decisional capacity Encourages and empowers PWD to make informed decisions for health care, or family/surrogate when appropriate Understands the need for patient-centered care and the importance of understanding quality of life from PWD perspectives Provides patient-centered care through the understanding and respecting of the importance of quality of life from PWD perspective Identifies the strengths and/or areas of improvement as perceived by the PWD and his/her family and/or social contacts Provides care to PWD based on information gathered from PWD, caretaker, and other health team members <p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies barriers to full access to all aspects of care including physiologic, psychosocial, and medical needs from all members in the healthcare setting

	Registered Nurse (RN)	Upon completion of Nurse Practitioner (NP) program, demonstrates knowledge, attitude, and skills of the practicing RN plus the following:
Skills	<p>PHYSIOLOGIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies that a person has a disability Describes differences between impairment, handicap, disability, according to World Health Organization (WHO) definitions Verbalizes differences between primary and secondary conditions of PWD Acknowledges accommodations and assistive devices utilized by PWD Identifies signs of abuse (physical, psychological, emotional, financial, sexual) and vulnerability for exploitation Identifies common psychiatric conditions Verbalizes the impact of actual or potential cognitive or physical decline on a PWD independence across the lifespan Verbalizes understanding of medications including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> indication, common side effects, and potential for polypharmacy Acknowledges the importance of preventive healthcare <p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbalizes the importance of gathering information regarding the PWD from all appropriate resources (PWD and caretaker, residential sources) Communicates directly with the PWD Gathers information regarding the PWD from all appropriate resources (PWD and caretaker, residential sources) Describes various methods of alternative and augmentative communication utilized by PWD Describes the importance of methods to assess the developmental level and functional health literacy of PWD 	<p>PHYSIOLOGIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses PWD need for accommodations and assistive devices, including use, efficacy, and function of devices, needed to function optimally in the home and community Implements assessments that include: evaluations about mobility, communication, need for alternate formats of communication and educational needs for self care Provides counseling about secondary conditions Provides information about the prevention and management of secondary conditions Anticipates progression of chronic conditions with aging and possible increased needs necessitating increased services or change in placement Screens for signs of abuse or exploitation using the Abuse Assessment Screen-Disability (AAS-D) Screens for common psychiatric conditions Screens for the impact of actual or potential cognitive or physical decline on PWD independence Evaluates patient for potential polypharmacy Encourages health promotion behaviors and provides routine and targeted screening and preventive healthcare Adjusts medication regimen, as indicated, to reduce or eliminate polypharmacy <p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses the developmental level and functional health literacy of PWD Assesses PWD for preferred method of communication Communicates effectively with PWD utilizing his/her preferred method of communication Provides treatment in consultation with collaborating providers, based on information regarding the PWD from all appropriate resources (PWD, caretaker, and residential sources)

	Registered Nurse (RN)	Upon completion of Nurse Practitioner (NP) program, demonstrates knowledge, attitude, and skills of the practicing RN plus the following:
Skills	<p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates the need to assess PWD for his/her specific needs to provide optimum healthcare • Question if PWD has Advance Directives <p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges that PWD has unique needs for access to and safe provision of health care as well as the safety of staff within the facility. • Maintains dignity and privacy of PWD <p>REFERRAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbalizes the ethical and legal right of PWD to obtain appropriate referral to meet all actual and anticipated needs. • Identifies appropriate health care resources for further evaluation and management of PWD 	<p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assesses the PWD concerning his/her life view and perceived quality of life • Provides health care information and treatment that are consistent with the PWD's life view and perceived quality of life • Ensures that PWD has Advance Directives if PWD is developmentally capable <p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that practice facilities are accessible: clinic/office rooms, waiting area, and bathroom facilities to provide optimum healthcare including communication, transfer, and access to services • Identifies accessible community resources and sites for primary care screening and referral services • Asks and assesses PWD about his/her specific needs and optimal strategies to provide care, including transferring from wheelchair to bed or exam table without jeopardizing the PWD's or staff's health or safety • Asks and assesses PWD about his/her specific needs for assistance and assistive devices (mobility, hearing, sight) <p>REFERRAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies, refers, and obtains appropriate health care resources for PWD seeking health care including and not limited to accommodations and assistive devices as needed • Identifies accessible sources of support for PWD and family/caretaker both within the healthcare environment and the community • Facilitates access to appropriate resources or referrals for mobility, communication, and need for alternate formats