Specialty Area of Practice

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**Introduction**

With the current influx in the health care designs, the industry is moving forward towards advanced technologies especially by focusing on population health, quality care and services. In this reformed system, the healthcare workforce needs to draw certain amendments and nurses will be liable for changing roles in the care delivery system. Nurses will now be entitled to a significant role therefore it is important for them to specialize in particular fields. Specialization will help them adjust to the contemporary care designs and regulatory policies accordingly. New roles for nurses are now emerging including public health management, patient training, health informatics, analysts, trauma caregivers, infant and elderly care etc. The objective of nursing in true terms can only be achieved in terms of care coordination and inter-professional engagements. New specialization programs have been introduced to address the future oriented health care systems. Nurses are required to improve their practice competencies for better knowledge of patient’s conditions, enhanced work skills and professional attitude.

**Area of specialty**

There is an extensive scope in the redesigning of primary health care delivery models to enhance easy access to quality services. Registered nurses are subjected to adopt leadership titles on the basis of their commitment with the patients, family, system priorities and the general population expectations (Smolowitz et al., 2015). In this contemporary health care model, advanced public health nurses employ a general assessment of health and care. They get to study how different factions of society interact with each other and a health care system. They examine the nature of individuals functioning within a care design and establish ways in which they can improve care quality on a significant scale. Public health nurses are also seen involved with the prevention strategies, awareness campaigns, disease screening processes and immunizing at-risk populations. Public health nurses mainly focus on the examination and treatment provision strategies to the whole community at large (Sellers et al., 2015). Their focus of interest is investing their efforts in the health care sectors, health insurance corporations and home-based health agencies.

**Advanced Public Health Nurses**

Just until recently, little efforts were made to focus on understanding the scope of this one of most future oriented field of nursing specialization. Public health practitioners influence the whole public health system by promoting and curating the important contributions and practices for achieving the population outcomes. The literature on public health workforce primarily focused on disease description including correlation between different internal and external factors to the disease, assessing the program interventions and citing the results of the study. In order to meet the contemporary and futuristic public health challenges for the workforce, researchers are focusing to provide them with all the required measurements and skills. The public health specialists and leaders have called for improved research and data collection for understanding all the dynamics of the field (Fraher, Spetz, & Naylor, 2015). The improvement and implementation of general surveys by public health organizations has contributed a lot in the development of workforce.

Traditionally, nursing graduates have been made to focus on critical care and surgical courses more than on population or public health education. This old perception has caused lack of support and understanding of the effective and efficient public health challenges especially for the students taking public health nursing as field specialization (Simpson & Richards, 2015). Health specialists have plead for reinforced need to shift the focus from disease care to strategies for promotion of health. They have also urged the health care workforce to move on from individual care delivery systems to social as well as cultural dimensions. As the curriculum for public health is still under review to better address the needs of population health, it is really hard to achieve better results sooner.

A skilled public health workforce is the need of the hour for establishing an effective public health care delivery system. However, apart from inconsistent assessment of public health work force, some efforts have been made on the national level to monitor analytically the size, structure, demographics, practice and academic background of individuals working in public health industry. In a survey of 3 years from 2010 to 2013, it was established that the size of local public health work force was in proportion to the size of state despite there was a huge budget cut at health departments during that time period (Beck & Boulton, 2015). Later, the ratio decreased in the following years due to variations in the local jurisdiction’s population size, redistricting, and modified governance frameworks. But, recent findings state that number of public health work force has recently stabilized again, though smaller in size in present, its scope will flourish in future. The integration of health departments with accountable care centers will cause the exceedingly significant role of public health nurses in the delivery of public health services.

**Skills and Characteristics of Public Health nurses**

Public health nurses are required to adapt an advanced attitude to address the public health competencies. They have to help improve the health status and welfare of the local populations in a global setup by promoting cooperation and principles for provision of best services (Pettit, McVicar, Knight‐Davidson, & Shaw‐Flach, 2019). Public health departments and institutions provide opportunities to the nursing scholars for developing skills for critical thinking, best communication and resourceful services to public. For this purpose, service learning approaches create prospects for the developing awareness about civic responsibilities and improving cultural competencies. Globally, public health nurses accomplish skills for providing population based care to culturally sensitive communities.

Public health principles are in practice internationally to make health care workforce provide behavior change interventions. Such brief changes can bring about significant changes in behavior of the patients and the public receiving health care. These behavior interventions can be provided by the health care nurses during their consultation periods. It is an important part of practice because of nurses’ recurrent face to face patient contact and can result in effective and efficient care delivery (Keyworth, Epton, Goldthorpe, Calam, & Armitage, 2018). Public health nurses are also required to gain basic knowledge about public health informatics as the industry is increasingly relying on electronic records, analytical studies and other information technologies. The intricacy and extended details related to public health nursing skills may often be confusing to the graduates.

Public health nursing demand certain competencies for an ideal public health nurse. Such some skills include basic knowledge about application of epidemiological principles in public health. They should demonstrate commitment to social justice and public health principles. They should be responsive to the collaborations with local and global partnerships, and communicate effectively. Public health nurses are also expected to bear strong leadership qualities for field and NGO projects. They should also employ ethical and professional values and culturally suitable behavior (Brown, 2017). The requirement for ethical behavior in international health nursing is one of the most important principles so it is necessary to include best practice guides in the curriculums (McDermott-Levy, Leffers, & Mayaka, 2018).

**Conclusion**

The health care system is changing rapidly thus demands need for the change in the behaviors and skills of the health care work force. As the concept of population health has recently become a prominent department, the role of public and population health nurses has grown prominently. Local and international communities seek health care assignments earnestly and thus the competencies for public health nurses have become intricate. With the emerging scope of public health, the field of public health nursing for specialization is quite contemporary in terms of roles and transformed health care designs. The institutions providing degrees in public health nursing should keep updating their curriculums as scholars need to work efficiently with technological advancements and global cultural settings. Not only educators, but nursing leaders, policymakers and employers too should mobilize to adjust with the transformed health care systems.

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