



**Standards for Differentiated Competencies of the Nursing Workforce  
at the Time of Entry into Practice ©**

**Approved by Steering Committee  
March 5, 1999**

**Revised by Education Committee of NM Center for Nursing Excellence  
December 2009**

**Philosophy**

We believe that patients are entitled to competent, culturally sensitive, comprehensive, individualized nursing care. We believe that patients have rights, as enumerated in the "Patients' Bill of Rights (AHA, 1992)." The scope of practice for licensed nurses is delineated in the New Mexico Nursing Practice Act. We believe that individuals delivering nursing care must do so within the provision of this act.

We believe that nurses should supervise unlicensed people who are performing nursing care. We believe that patients should be able to identify their nursing caregivers by name, licensure status, and employment status. We recognize that nursing care can be delivered in a variety of settings, including many that are nontraditional. However, we believe that the quality of nursing care must be maintained regardless of the setting.

Entry level competency in nursing is assured by completion of an approved program in nursing, regardless of the level, by licensure at the LPN and RN levels, and certification at the advanced practice level. Continued competency is demonstrated by practice that meets accepted standards of care. (See Reference List). As individuals grow in their practice, they may advance along Benner's stages from Advanced Beginners to Expert (Benner, 1984).

The field of health care changes rapidly, and to keep current with accepted practice requires lifelong learning. We believe that excellent nursing practice is research based.

In New Mexico, the definition of nursing is stated in the Nursing Practice Act. It states: "Practice of nursing" means assisting individuals, families, or communities in maintaining or attaining optimal health, assessing and implementing a plan of care to accomplish defined goals, and evaluating responses to care and treatment. This practice is based on specialized knowledge, judgment, and nursing skills acquired through

educational preparation in nursing and in the biological, physical, social, and behavioral sciences. This includes, but is not limited to, (1) initiating and maintaining comfort measures; (2) promoting and supporting optimal human functions and responses; (3) establishing an environment conducive to well-being or to the support of a dignified death; (4) collaborating on the healthcare regimen; (5) administering medications and performing treatments prescribed by a person authorized in this state or in any other state in the United States to prescribe them; (6) recording and reporting nursing observations, assessments, interventions, and responses to healthcare; (7) providing counseling and health teaching; (8) delegating nursing interventions that may be performed safely by others and are not in conflict with the NPA; and (9) maintaining accountability for safe and effective care.ö (Nursing Practice Act. State of New Mexico, 1991. 61-3-3-J, 1-9). Nursing requires participation in collaborative practice with other health professionals to meet the goal of providing quality patient care and positive patient outcomes.



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March 5, 1999

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**I. DIRECT CARE:** Those nursing practices that encompass all activities which support therapeutic interventions, safety standards, preventive care, and health promotion for patients. A crucial skill for all members of the nursing workforce is cultural competency, in which the patient/family's unique understanding of health and illness is known and respected, within the context of providing excellent nursing care.

<b>Unlicensed Assistive Personnel</b>	<b>Licensed Practical Nurse</b>	<b>Associate Degree Nurse</b>	<b>Baccalaureate Nurse</b>	<b>Masters Nurse</b>	<b>Doctorate of Nursing Practice</b>	<b>Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing</b>
<b>Assessment</b>						
Identifies basic patient needs and identifies obvious deviations from normal; collects and reports specific data as directed	Collects basic data according to established protocol	Assesses and analyzes data from patient, family, and others within context of clients' culture	Assesses complex patient needs from pre-admission to post-discharge within context of clients' culture	Demonstrates advanced clinical judgment and cultural sensitivity in assessment of individuals, families, groups, and communities	Practices independently and assumes full accountability for actions in assessing undifferentiated patients	Uses assessment data to contribute to policy development

**I. DIRECT CARE (continued)**

<b>Unlicensed Assistive Personnel</b>	<b>Licensed Practical Nurse</b>	<b>Associate Degree Nurse</b>	<b>Baccalaureate Nurse</b>	<b>Masters Nurse</b>	<b>Doctorate of Nursing Practice</b>	<b>Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing</b>
<b>Nursing Diagnosis</b>						
	Uses established nursing diagnosis to describe needs of patients with common, well-defined problems	Formulates appropriate nursing diagnosis for individuals and families to describe actual and potential health problems	Formulates nursing diagnosis for individuals, families, groups, and communities in complex situations	Formulates and validates nursing diagnoses for individuals, families, groups, and communities in complex situations	Practices independently in diagnosing undifferentiated patients	Adds to taxonomy of nursing diagnoses through research
<b>Planning</b>						
Follows directions for care within the context of the developed care plan	Participates in the formulation of individualized care plans	Develops care plans for individuals; establishing goals and priorities for care with client/family and other members of the health care team	Guides the interdisciplinary team to choose evidenced-based approaches to clinical decision making for planning care for specific client populations	As part of planned organizational change, outlines systematic approaches to develop evidence-based clinical practice guidelines	Critically analyzes data by integrating knowledge from the arts and sciences and from the evidence base of nursing to formulate competencies/practice across patient populations	Conducts research that provides evidence to support practice or elucidates the need for new protocols or programs

**I. DIRECT CARE (continued)**

<b>Unlicensed Assistive Personnel</b>	<b>Licensed Practical Nurse</b>	<b>Associate Degree Nurse</b>	<b>Baccalaureate Nurse</b>	<b>Masters Nurse</b>	<b>Doctorate of Nursing Practice</b>	<b>Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing</b>
<b>Implementation</b>						
Carries out assignment as directed	Provides care according to standards for patients with common, well-defined problems	Prioritizes nursing care as patient situation changes	Coordinates comprehensive care to patients with complex needs	Implements advanced practice role and coordinates interdisciplinary teams	Integrates nursing care in a system; uses evidence to provide impetus for continuous quality improvement	Uses evidence for systems to research system changes for quality improvement
<b>Evaluation</b>						
Collects specific data, as directed, related to outcomes of patient care	Modifies nursing care approaches based on systematic evaluation of the patient	Determines effectiveness of care and revises plan of care for individual patients and their families	Evaluates effectiveness of care provided to patients, families, aggregates, and communities	Evaluates continuity of care throughout the health system for patients with complex needs; assists in developing standards for emerging nursing care problems	Applies clinical investigative skills for evaluation of health outcomes at the patient, family, and community in the development of standards/protocols for practice	Generates outcome data and researches new policy to systematically improve the health status of patients and populations.

**II. RELATIONSHIPS WITH PATIENTS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS:** Relationships with patients, families, and other health care professionals are crucial to achieving the goals of health care. Members of the nursing workforce serve as patient advocates. This is done collegially with all members of the health care team through communication, collaboration, and cooperation in the organizations and management of care and care providers.

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<b>Advocacy</b>						
Reports patient concerns/problems to nurse	Supports patient decisions	Advocates for patients and families	Advocates for patients, families, and providers	Advocates for providers, peers, clients, and communities	Advocates within organizations and diverse systems for providers, peers, clients, and communities	Influences health care policy through advocacy
<b>Collaboration/Communication</b>						
Contributes to team functioning	Collaborates with patients, families, and team members	Collaborates and coordinates with other team members	Collaborates and coordinates with groups within the community	Coordinates and consults with organizations and related professional groups	Demonstrates skills in negotiating, consensus building, and partnering skills in complex organizations	Collaborates and consults with institutions, organizations, and diverse professional groups

**II. RELATIONSHIPS WITH PATIENTS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS (continued)**

<b>Unlicensed Assistive Personnel</b>	<b>Licensed Practical Nurse</b>	<b>Associate Degree Nurse</b>	<b>Baccalaureate Nurse</b>	<b>Masters Nurse</b>	<b>Doctorate of Nursing Practice</b>	<b>Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing</b>
<b>Therapeutic Communication and Interpersonal Relationships</b>						
Uses selected medical terms and abbreviations; communicates a caring and helpful attitude to patients	Interacts with patients, families, and health team members; communicates a caring and helpful attitude to all	Uses effective communication techniques with individuals, families, and health team members	Uses communication skills with patient populations and professional communities	Uses advanced communication skills, including conflict resolution, with individuals and groups; analyzes and evaluates effectiveness of interpersonal relationships established by the health care team.	Facilitates advanced communication skills; applies knowledge of organizational behavior/ systems in evaluating the effectiveness of interpersonal /interdisciplinary relationships established by health care team/ or community partners	Researches effectiveness of therapeutic communication techniques; develops outcomes criteria and expectations for the effectiveness of interpersonal relationships and communication
<b>Management and Supervision</b>						
Understands limits of own roles and responds appropriately to supervision; manages own assignment	Organizes and manages care for own patients and delegates to unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP)	Organizes patient care and delegates nursing care to peers, UAPs, and LPNs; accountable for care done under supervision	Accountable for and supervises health care personnel in carrying out delegated responsibilities	Accountable for planning, supporting, and evaluating patient care provided directly or delegated ; identifies, formulates, and implements strategies for improving care	Accountable for planning, supporting and evaluating care provided throughout complex systems or organizations; formulates strategic plans to improve care	Modifies health care delivery systems and formulates policy for the evaluation of nursing practice based on research and synthesis of evidence

**II. RELATIONSHIPS WITH PATIENTS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS (continued)**

Unlicensed Assistive Personnel	Licensed Practical Nurse	Associate Degree Nurse	Baccalaureate Nurse	Masters Nurse	Doctorate of Nursing Practice	Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing
<b>Professional Development</b>						
Able to prove requirement of obtaining CE annually	Able to prove requirement of obtaining CE per licensure biennium	Able to prove requirement of obtaining CE per licensure biennium	Able to prove requirement of obtaining CE per licensure biennium	Able to prove requirement of obtaining CE as indicated for advanced practice certification and licensure	Able to prove requirement of obtaining CE as indicated for advanced practice certification and licensure	Able to prove requirement of obtaining CE per licensure biennium and also for advanced practice if applicable
Interested in self improvement	Participates in developing personal potential and professional development	Participates in professional development activities; values professional growth in self and others; values education for a BSN	Fosters professional and personal growth in self and health team members; supports an environment that fosters professional growth in self and health team members	Plans and implements experiences which foster professional and personal growth in self and members of the nursing health care team	Provides leadership in establishing a professional environment in which all members or the team reach highest possible functioning	Provides leadership in professional organizations and complex systems to advance professionals or teams to reach highest possible functioning

**II. RELATIONSHIPS WITH PATIENTS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS (continued)**

Unlicensed Assistive Personnel	Licensed Practical Nurse	Associate Degree Nurse	Baccalaureate Nurse	Masters Nurse	Doctorate of Nursing Practice	Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing
<b>Leadership</b>						
Practices under supervision of licensed person	Practices with license under supervision of RN, MD, or dentist	Practices with license; delegates nursing care and supervises team members	Demonstrates leadership role in delivery of nursing care to patients, families, and groups	Assumes leadership in advanced practice settings and mentors others for leadership responsibilities	Assumes increasingly complex leadership roles; provides leadership to foster interprofessional collaboration	Provides leadership to the profession; provides intellectual leadership to the discipline

**III. MEMBERSHIP IN THE DISCIPLINE:** Membership in the discipline of nursing creates expectations for individual accountability, personal responsibility for professional growth and nursing's public image, and a commitment to practice within ethical and legal frameworks. Members of the nursing workforce differ in the expectations the discipline of nursing holds in respect to accountability and personal responsibility for professional growth. All members of the nursing workforce are expected to commit to a practice that is within the individual's scope of legal practice, and is fully ethical according to accepted standards.

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<b>Ethics and Legal Issues</b>						
Adheres to standards of confidentiality and ethical behavior	Practices within legal definition of role; adheres to nursing code of ethics	Demonstrates knowledge of ethical/legal principles as applied to self, patients, and team members within their scope of practice	Assists other team members to recognize ethical/legal limits of practice	Applies ethical/legal frameworks in evaluating nursing practice	Applies ethical/legal frameworks in evaluating nursing practice and in evaluating and setting parameters to improve practice outcomes	Explores, through research and reflection, parameters of ethical ambiguities in practice to influence policy determination
<b>Accountability</b>						
Accountable for actions and understands limits of the role	Accountable for own practice and for nursing care delegated to UAPs	Accountable for own practice and delegated care; implements standards of care within scope of practice	Incorporates practice standards from professional organizations into own practice	Develops and incorporates standards of advanced practice	Accountable for independent practice; develops and incorporates standards of practice and advanced practice throughout complex systems	Advances the profession through research and development of standards of practice and assists in dissemination of new standards

**III. MEMBERSHIP IN THE DISCIPLINE (continued)**

<b>Unlicensed Assistive Personnel</b>	<b>Licensed Practical Nurse</b>	<b>Associate Degree Nurse</b>	<b>Baccalaureate Nurse</b>	<b>Masters Nurse</b>	<b>Doctorate of Nursing Practice</b>	<b>Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing</b>
<b>Professional Responsibility</b>						
Seeks opportunity to improve own knowledge base; takes advantage of opportunities for building skills	Assesses own abilities and potential and sets goals; demonstrates ongoing personal and professional development	Understands role of professional organizations and actively participates	Is actively involved in specialty and/or professional organizations and participates in leadership roles	Achieves certification in advanced roles	Achieves certification in advanced roles; takes leadership roles in advanced practice organizations to set practice standards	Contributes to assuring that professional organizations reflect appropriate standards for the discipline
<b>Image of Nursing</b>						
Aware that own actions reflect upon discipline of nursing	Promotes a positive personal and professional image of nursing	Promotes a positive personal and professional image of nursing; encourages professional image in team members; encourages improvements in image of nursing	Models professional image; promotes consumer awareness of nursing's contribution to health care and is actively involved in consumer groups	Models professional image; interprets advanced nursing practice to the public and other health care professionals	Models professional image; interprets role of the DNP to the public, interdisciplinary colleagues, and to organizations	Models professional image; assumes leadership in assuring that image of nursing is constantly improved within organizations and society

**III. MEMBERSHIP IN THE DISCIPLINE (continued)**

Unlicensed Assistive Personnel	Licensed Practical Nurse	Associate Degree Nurse	Baccalaureate Nurse	Masters Nurse	Doctorate of Nursing Practice	Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing
<b>Values</b>						
Values opportunities to work with health care team	Values role and LPN contributions to care	Values profession and demonstrates professional caring	Values profession and demonstrates professional caring; articulates and models the values of caring	Values profession and demonstrates professional caring; utilizes theories of caring as a means of valuing patient interactions	Values profession and demonstrates professional caring; utilizes knowledge from arts and sciences within the context of nursing's philosophical framework and scientific foundation	Values profession and demonstrates professional caring; contributes to theoretical constructs which lead to research and reflection upon the core values of nursing

**IV.CONTEXT:** The nursing workforce is responsible for the promotion, restoration, maintenance, and rehabilitation of health in a variety of settings. To carry out this responsibility, members of the nursing workforce are integrated within complex systems of care. As in all systems, there is a reciprocal relationship between the nursing workforce and the larger political, social, cultural, economical, and technological systems that form the context for all nursing care.

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<b>Political Activism</b>						
Is aware that political involvement can influence health care	Is aware that personal involvement in political activities can assist in influencing health care	Utilizes political processes appropriate to the system to improve patient care, nursing practice, and the context of health care	Actively involved in political processes within personal and professional life to improve patient care, nursing practice, and the context of health care	Demonstrates leadership skills and knowledge of the political process to effect change within the practice setting	Assumes a leadership role within select groups and knowledge of the political process to develop strategies for change within the practice setting	Assumes responsibility for influencing the development of policy to influence the political environment of nursing practice
<b>Resource Management</b>						
Demonstrates awareness of cost effective measures and follows directions in implementing them properly	Provides patient care in a cost effective manner	Identifies concerns about cost containment strategies needed to preserve resources; provides patient care in cost effective manner	Develops strategies to obtain needed health care resources within the practice environment; participates in the preparation and management of the unit budget	Analyzes health care delivery mechanisms and designs and implements cost containment strategies needed to preserve human and material resources	Evaluates how organizational, structural, financial, marketing, and policy decisions impact cost, use of resources, and accessibility of health care	Analyzes system level strategies for balancing cost containment and positive patient outcomes; provides data for policy level decisions which affect resources for health care

**IV. CONTEXT (continued)**

Unlicensed Assistive Personnel	Licensed Practical Nurse	Associate Degree Nurse	Baccalaureate Nurse	Masters Nurse	Doctorate of Nursing Practice	Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing
<b>Technology</b>						
Uses selected technology safely	Uses current technology to enhance patient care; minimal computer literacy	Adept at the use of current technology; participates in the evaluation of the efficacy of technology	Adept at the use of current technology; participates in planning for adoption of new technologies	Adept at the use of current technology; Compares and promotes adoption of innovations for patient care; teaches utilization of new technology	Adept at the use of current technology; demonstrates information literacy in complex decision making	Adept at the use of current technology; participates in developing and researching the efficacy of new technologies
<b>Scope of Role</b>						
Provides care to individuals only in structured settings where supervision is available	Provides care to individuals and families in structured settings under supervision	Provides care to individuals, families, and groups in predictable and complex situations	Provides community ó centered care to patients in unpredictable and complex situations; provides leadership in a variety of roles	Provides advanced generalized and specialized practice in any setting; may include direct care, administration, or teaching of nursing	Provides care which transcends organizational/system boundaries; provides care to communities; develops systems of care where none exist; assumes full accountability as a licensed independent practitioner	Provides care which transcends organizational/system boundaries; provides care to communities; researches and provides input into standards outlining the scope of the role for health care providers

**V. RESEARCH:** Scientific acquisition of knowledge is necessary to the further development of the discipline of nursing. Depending upon the educational preparation of the member of the nursing workforce, the individual member carries varying responsibility for the development of new knowledge, use of evidence-based nursing practice, and evaluation of nursing outcomes, based upon scientific methods.

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<b>Research</b>						
Is aware of assigned tasks relative to research protocol	Participates in data collection within established studies	With guidance, applies evidence based findings in the provision of nursing care	Evaluates evidenced based research to contribute to decisions to implement findings in provision of nursing care	Participates in planning and implementing nursing research studies; evaluates evidenced based research to contribute to decisions to implement findings in provision of nursing care	Designs and implements nursing practice studies; translates research and data to anticipate, predict, and explain variations in practice; disseminates findings in patient-care protocols and in practice journals	Designs, implements, and disseminates research studies; conveys findings to practitioners in usable form for improvement of clinical practice

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We acknowledge the use of each of these documents in building this updated list of competencies.

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