

1.4.18 Nursing Competency Program

(a) Policy

- (1) The California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS) Nursing Services Branch maintains a competency program to ensure nursing practice is consistent with the nursing process and practice established by the California state nursing licensing and certification agencies.
- (2) Licensed and unlicensed CCHCS nursing staff shall demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to achieve an appropriate level of competency, and perform within their scope of practice. Nursing staff competency shall promote compliance with CCHCS and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation policies and procedures, federal and state laws and regulations, and nationally accepted nursing standards.
- (3) The competency program includes:
 - (A) Educational programs
 - (B) Competency validation
 - (C) Tracking
- (4) Competency validation occurs on a continuum. This continuum shall include assessment of competencies during the hiring process, during the orientation period, and throughout employment as the requirements of the job and needs of the organization change.

(b) Purpose

To ensure the following:

- (1) Competent nursing staff
- (2) Positive patient outcomes
- (3) Patient safety

(c) Responsibility

The Statewide Chief Nurse Executive (CNE) is responsible for statewide implementation of this policy, and the institutional CNEs are responsible for the local implementation of this policy.

(d) Procedure Overview

The CCHCS Nursing Services Branch shall maintain a competency program to include educational programs, competency validation, and tracking to ensure competent nursing staff, positive patient outcomes, and patient safety.

(e) Responsibility

The institutional CNEs are responsible for implementation of this procedure.

(f) Procedure

(1) Educational Trainings and Competencies Development

Educational trainings and competencies shall be developed by CCHCS headquarters (HQ) Nursing Services based upon internal and/or external requirements. Nursing Leadership shall review and update all nursing educational training and competencies developed by Nursing Services, as needed.

(2) Education and Competency Validation Components

(A) Registered Nurses (RNs)

The Nursing Practice Act sets forth the duties that all RNs, regardless of role, population, or specialty are expected to perform competently. The components include but are not limited to:

1. Assessment – The correctional RN collects comprehensive data pertinent to the patient’s health and/or the situation.
2. Diagnosis – The correctional RN analyzes the assessment data to determine the diagnoses, health concerns, or organizational issues.
3. Outcomes Identification – The correctional RN identifies expected outcomes for a plan individualized to the patient or the situation.
4. Planning – The correctional RN develops a plan that prescribes strategies and alternatives to attain expected outcomes.
5. Implementation – The correctional RN implements the identified plan.
6. Coordination of Care – The correctional RN coordinates care delivery.
7. Health Teaching and Health Promotion – The correctional RN employs strategies to promote health and a safe environment.
8. Evaluation – The correctional RN evaluates progress toward attainment of outcomes.

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(B) Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) and Psychiatric Technicians (PTs)

LVNs and PTs shall be provided education and training within their scope of practice and shall be expected to perform competently. The components include but are not limited to:

1. Medication management – The LVN/PT follows the six rights of medication administration; is knowledgeable in the medication classifications and common side effects of medications being administered; and provides patient education related to medication indications, use, adherence and side effects.
2. Subjective and objective data collection – The LVN/PT collects data pertinent to the patient’s health and/or situation.
3. Therapeutic interventions – The LVN/PT provides basic nursing care, treatments, and techniques as ordered or delegated.
4. Patient education and group facilitation – The LVN/PT provides evidence-based patient teaching and employs techniques for facilitating psycho-educational and psycho-social rehabilitation groups.

(C) Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)

CNAs shall be provided education and training within their scope of practice and shall be expected to perform competently. The components include but are not limited to:

1. Patient care – The CNA assists and/or provides patients with their activities of daily living.
2. Observations and data collection – The CNA observes for changes in the patient’s condition, obtains vital signs, weights, and measures a patient’s intake and output.

(3) Education and Competency Validation Frequency

Education and competency validation is conducted:

(A) Quarterly for new hires for first year, annually thereafter, and as needed based upon:

1. Quality improvement
2. A performance evaluation
3. Performance improvement plan
4. New policies or procedures
5. When a deficiency is identified

(B) Competency validation results shall be part of an employee’s performance appraisals.

(4) Education and Competency Validators

Nursing clinical staff must demonstrate competency prior to teaching educational trainings and validating competency of nursing staff. Methods to acquire knowledge and/or skills include but are not limited to:

- (A) Continuing education programs
- (B) Review of policies and procedures
- (C) In-service education
- (D) Training-for-Trainers
- (E) Simulation exercises
- (F) Observation/demonstration

(5) Competency Validation Methods

(A) Competency validation methods used to measure the abilities of an individual for a specific competency standard include but are not limited to:

1. Tests
2. Skills validation
3. Observation
4. Case Studies
5. Exemplars
6. Peer Reviews by Nursing Professional Practice Council
7. Mock Events
8. Quality Improvement Monitors

(B) Some competencies may require a combination of validation methods. The nursing leadership shall determine the validation methods for each competency developed by HQ Nursing Services.

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(6) Education and Competency Validation: Documentation and Tracking

Nursing staff's competency shall be documented in the:

- (A) Supervisory File
- (B) Nurse Educator File
- (C) Education and Competency Tracking Database

References

- California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 5, Licensing and Certification of Health Facilities, Home Health Agencies, Clinics and Referral Agencies
- Nursing Practice Act, California Business and Professions Code, Division 2, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 2700 *et seq.*
- Vocational Nursing Practice Act, California Business and Professions Code, Division 2, Chapter 6.5, Article 1, Section 2840 *et seq.*
- Psychiatric Technicians Law, California Business and Professions Code, Division 2, Chapter 10, Article 1, Section 4500 *et seq.*
- American Nurses Association, Scope and Standards of Practice, Correctional Nursing, 2nd Edition

Revision History

Effective: 02/2002

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