

NURSES ASSOCIATION OF NEW BRUNSWICK

**GUIDELINES FOR CAMP NURSING
IN NEW BRUNSWICK**

FEBRUARY 2007



Nurses Association of New Brunswick

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GUIDELINES FOR CAMP NURSING IN NEW BRUNSWICK

I. INTRODUCTION

The *Guidelines for Camp Nursing in New Brunswick* document has been developed by the Nurses Association of New Brunswick to highlight the role of the camp nurse and to provide direction and information for the nurse in preparing for the health needs of campers.

It is recommended that the camp nurse share these guidelines with the camp administrator, board of directors and camp physician.

II. ROLE OF THE CAMP NURSE

Camp nursing provides an opportunity for registered nurses to practise their profession and enjoy life experiences at the same time. The philosophy of care in a camp setting is quite different from many other settings. The emphasis is on healthy experiences whether the campers are children or adults, and whether or not they have health problems.

In partial fulfilment of its mission, the Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB) established the *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses (2005)*. These standards outline the minimum expectations for nurses in providing safe, effective, and ethical nursing care in any practice setting, including camps. It is recommended that the standards be used as a reference when reading and implementing these guidelines. All nurses are accountable for their nursing decisions and actions.

The responsibilities of the camp nurse may vary between camps but often include:

- preparing of the health-care centre prior to the opening of camp;
- reviewing/revising camp health care policy and procedures in conjunction with camp management;
- maintaining health records according to camp policy and NANB's documentation standards: *Documenting care: Standards for Registered Nurses (2002)*;
- obtaining consent for treatment when providing care;
- reviewing pre-camp Health Forms of campers and staff;
- collecting, storing, and administering all medications for campers and staff;
- providing health care such as emergency care, first aid to campers and staff, health promotion/disease prevention activities;

- having knowledge in local primary care resources (eg.; hospital or clinic) and how to access them; and
- being familiar with NANB *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses (2005)* and CNA *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses (2002)*.

III. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE CAMP NURSE

The nurse at camp functions more independently and autonomously than nurses in hospitals, clinics, or home health settings. Physical facilities, supplies, and support services can be extremely limited in the camp setting. Camp nurses, therefore, need education and experience that prepares them to work without the institutional structure of hospitals as well as personal characteristics that allow them to adapt quickly.

The following are recommended qualifications for a camp nurse:

- must be actively registered with the Nurses Association of New Brunswick;
- must have current, appropriate first aid skills;
- must have current CPR certification;
- should have an appropriate mix of knowledge and experience in occupational health, school health, community health, medical nursing and/or paediatric nursing;
- should have effective communication skills; and
- should be adaptable and creative.

IV. QUESTIONS FOR THE CAMP NURSE TO ASK

Camp nurses have a broad range of responsibilities and functions. Answers to the following questions will provide a good basis of knowledge about the job and the supports provided by the camp.

Camp

1. What type of camp activities are offered; what is the number of campers; what is the age range of campers?
2. Is this a salaried or volunteer position?

Responsibilities

3. Is there a written job description? If so, are the following aspects addressed:
 - a) reporting structure;
 - b) attendance at staff meetings;
 - c) list of duties;
 - d) responsibilities related to general hygiene (of the kitchen, cabins, wash house, drinking water);
 - e) responsibilities related to first aid kits, out-tripping and maintaining sufficient infirmary supplies;
 - f) responsibilities related to supervision of other health care staff;
 - g) responsibilities related to orientation of other camp staff;
 - h) on-call requirements.
4. Who initiates contact with parents/guardians and under what circumstances?
5. What type of insurance is provided by the employer for the nurse?
6. How many nurses or other health care providers are at camp? What are the responsibilities/authority regarding each other?
7. Is there time off? What coverage is available for time off? Consult New Brunswick Employment Standards about employment conditions including days of rest (Employment Standards of New Brunswick, 2003)
8. What are the first aid/CPR qualifications of other staff?
9. Are there procedures/protocols for emergency situations such as fire, lost campers, medical emergency, and death? What are the nurse's responsibilities in these cases? Are there medical protocols in place, developed by a physician and registered nurse, approved by the camp board/employer?
10. Under what circumstances may the nurse be off the camp ground?

Health Centre Activities

11. Is the health centre clearly identified?
12. Do campers visit the camp nurse on the first day of camp? If so, what is included in this visit? (eg. health forms, medications, etc.). Is a primary assessment required or only on an "as needed" basis?
13. What are the hours for the health centre? What arrangements are made for health care at other times?
14. Who administers prescription medications to campers/staff? Is it delegated to non- nurses or LPNs, or student nurse employees?
15. What medications are provided by the camp? Are protocols in place for use?
16. What health problems are usually encountered at this camp?
17. What form of record keeping and documentation is employed?
18. Is there a physician on site? How close to medical facilities is the camp? What arrangement is there for accessing medical consultation and/or treatment?
19. What equipment is in the health centre?
20. What reference material is available at the camp?

Other

21. What facilities for laundry, store and recreation are available at the camp or in the local area?
22. What is the transport to and from camp for staff and campers?

V. LIABILITY PROTECTION

In order to practice camp nursing in the province of New Brunswick, the nurse in camp nursing must be registered with the Nurses Association of New Brunswick. As an NANB member, the nurse is eligible for professional liability protection from the Canadian Nurses Protective Society (CNPS, 2006). The nurse's employment status is irrelevant for CNPS protection. She may be acting in a volunteer capacity.

The nurse should also determine if the camp has its own liability insurance and discuss with camp management the type of coverage that is held.

VI. HEALTH CARE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

It often becomes the nurse's responsibility, in conjunction with camp management, to develop or revise health care policy and procedures.

There are many topics that require policy including:

- a) job description for the nurse including qualifications and responsibilities;
- b) agreement with off-site camp physician including annual signature on medical directives and protocols;
- c) mandatory submission of Personal Health/Medical Form by the camper and staff member prior to camp start-up and the information to be included;
- d) services provided by the health care centre including hours of coverage;
- e) collection, administration, and storage of medications;
- f) specific procedures to follow in an emergency situation;
- g) protocols or medical directives for common health problems and emergency first aid;
- h) protocols for documentation; and
- i) process to review and revise protocols and medical directives.

VII. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Medical Directives/Protocols

It is helpful to establish medical directives/protocols and procedures for common health problems found at camp. For example, actions to be taken for minor injuries (cuts, scrapes, sunburn, bites, sprains), acute inflammatory conditions (runny noses, sore throats, ear aches), major trauma (burns, bone fracture), and others problems (homesickness, etc.).

A medical directive or a protocol is an outline of actions to be followed in caring for a camper or staff when a specific condition is recognized. These medical directives or protocols allow for nursing judgment and discretion based on nursing assessment. A medical directive/protocol may include reasons for certain actions and it may include suggestions for the use of over the counter medications.

Medical directives or protocols should be developed jointly between by the camp physician and the camp nurse. NANB recommends that they be reviewed and revised as necessary and signed by the camp physician, nurse and administrator prior to each camping year. When a medical directive or a protocol is utilized, it is noted on the camper's record and referenced as such.

The following is a sample outline for a Medical Directive or Protocol:

Suggested Information to be Included in a Medical Directive/Protocol for Poison Ivy/ Dermatitis

Organize the information under the following headings:

1. **Recognition of contact with poison ivy:** Address details such as the following:
 - a) appearance and location of vesicles;
 - b) speed of onset and duration of rash; and
 - c) type of contact with plant (e.g. direct contact, air borne)
2. **Treatment on Initial Contact:** Include actions such as the following:
 - a) washing the affected area with an alkaline soap; and
 - b) treatment of clothing.
3. **Treatment of blisters:** Include actions such as the following:
 - a) use of particular medications such as calamine lotion; and
 - b) directions about when to consult the physician (e.g. when more than one small area of the body is affected steroid therapy may be indicated).

VIII. MANAGING MEDICATIONS

Administration of Medications

Administration of medication may be one of the major responsibilities of the camp nurse.

The same good practice principles apply to camp nursing that apply in any care setting: the right medication, in the right dosage, to the right person, at the right time, by the right route, for the right reason and right documentation. (College of Nurses of Ontario , 2005).

The nurse will ensure the following responsibilities are carried out:

- a) review of pre-camp health forms to determine prescription and over the counter (OTC) medications used by the campers and staff;

- b) documentation of all medications given;
- c) establishment of a safe system of administration. For example, campers are advised to give their medications to the nurse for safe keeping and come to the Health Centre for the dose at the prescribed time. At some camps, the nurse may administer medications at meal-time;
- d) establishment of a monitoring system in the case of self-medication by campers;
- e) retention by campers, at all times, of inhalant puffers and anaphylactic kits. Counsellors are made aware of which campers carry these medications;
- f) counsellors are made aware of the indications for use of inhalant puffers and injectable allergy medications and basic procedures to assist the camper in taking these. (Caution: when possible, it is essential that campers administer their own medications.);
- g) any medication accompanying a camper should remain in its original container (Note: If desired, parents may request their pharmacist re-dispense the medication);
- h) for overnight/short trips away from camp, it is recommended that small containers of medications be purchased to send with campers. Medications should not be transferred from a large stock bottle into smaller packages. The transferring of drugs from one container to another and labelling that container is called "dispensing". Dispensing medications for individuals other than yourself contravenes the provincial Pharmacy Act and the federal Food and Drug Act; and
- i) Over the counter medications and preparations (e.g., acetaminophen, calamine lotion) do not require a prescription; therefore, they are not part of the controlled act of prescribing. Many agencies require a physician's order before a nurse can administer over the counter medication. When administering OTC medication with no physician's order, the nurse is accountable for deciding that an OTC medication is appropriate and is accountable for the outcome of the decision. The health care team should determine what OTC medication will be stocked and used at the camp. An agency/camp board policy or medical directive should be in place concerning administration of OTC medications

Storage of Medications

The camp nurse is responsible for ensuring the safe storage of medications. The following standards should be maintained:

- a) store medications in a safe and secure place;
- b) maintain a list of stock items . A minimal number of items are kept;
- c) verify expiry dates of drugs before camp begins and on an ongoing basis; and
- d) assure proper storage of medications.

IX. DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is an integral part of providing nursing care as outlined in NANB's *Documenting Care: Standards for Registered Nurses* (2002). Camp nurses are expected to record any nursing care that is given to a camper or staff. Although the camp owns the records, nurses have an obligation to protect and maintain the camper's right to confidentiality of the health information on the record. Records should be stored by the management of the camp.

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