



POSITION STATEMENT ÉNONCÉ

Nurses Association of New Brunswick • L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers du Nouveau-Brunswick

FRAMEWORK FOR A QUALITY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT FOR REGISTERED NURSES

Background

Registered nurses play an important role in the delivery of health care services as the front line integrators and coordinators of health care delivery across the continuum of care. The quality of nurses work environments has direct consequences for job satisfaction, productivity, recruitment and retention, and ultimately, client outcomes. Increasingly, nurses are voicing their concerns about the ability to provide safe, quality, ethical care in today's workplace.

It is the responsibility of individual nurses to act professionally and to be accountable for their own practice. However, at times, nurses are unable to meet NANB standards for reasons that are related to their practice environment and are beyond their control. In particular, unmanageable workloads, the loss of nursing leadership positions and few opportunities for continuing education make it difficult for nurses to consistently meet NANB standards in some organizations.

Assumptions

1. A competent registered nurse, in a quality setting, will practice according to standards and engage in reflective practice and ongoing learning to provide appropriate, effective and ethical care that contributes to the best possible health outcome for the client.
2. The individual nurse's accountability for their practice and ongoing competence is different from the overall accountability in the organization for systems and processes required to create a quality practice environment that supports professional practice.
3. When key quality attributes are in place, competent nurses can meet the standards (practice expectations) and clients can better achieve quality outcomes.
4. Organizations that create quality practice environments for nurses also provide a quality work environment for other members of the health care team and ultimately contribute to improved client outcomes.

Principles

Work environments enable or disable nurses and other health care professionals in their ability to provide safe care.

Creating quality practice environments is a shared responsibility of governments, employers and nursing organizations.

Nurses value and advocate for quality practice environments that have the organizational structures and resources necessary to ensure safety, support and respect for all persons in the work setting"(Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses, p.17).

Nurses promote a practice environment that supports professional responsibility and accountability and ethical practice (Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses, p. 12).

Definition

Quality professional practice environment:

One in which client needs are met and health outcomes are achieved within the quality framework mandated by the organization and where nurses are supported by strong organizational attributes to meet practice expectations.

Necessary attributes for a quality professional practice environment

In an effort to support members and to protect the public, NANB has identified five attributes that must be in place to ensure a quality professional practice environment.

The five attributes that nurses have identified as important for a quality practice environment are:

1. Workload Management: There are sufficient nurses to provide safe, competent, ethical care.
2. Nursing Leadership: There are competent and well-prepared nurse leaders at all levels in the organization.
3. Control over Practice: Nurses have responsibility, authority and accountability for nursing practice.
4. Professional Development: The organization supports and encourages a lifelong learning philosophy and promotes a learning environment.
5. Organizational Support: The organization's mission, values, policies and practices support and value nurses and the delivery of safe and appropriate nursing care.

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