Advanced Nursing Practice

Advanced nursing practice (ANP) is an umbrella term describing an advanced level of clinical nursing practice that maximizes the use of graduate educational preparation, in-depth nursing knowledge and expertise in meeting the health needs of individuals, families, groups, communities or populations. It involves the use of critical thinking, analyzing and synthesizing knowledge, understanding, interpreting and applying nursing theory and research, and developing and advancing nursing knowledge and the profession (CNA, 2008).

There is a substantial body of research that attests to the safety and effectiveness of ANP roles. ANP roles are associated with reductions in: hospital length of stay, readmissions to hospitals, emergency room visits, and overall costs associated with care and higher client satisfaction. Through innovative nursing interventions and a comprehensive view of health care, ANP roles improve access to effective, integrated and coordinated services across the continuum of care.

Registered nurses working in advanced nursing practice roles contribute to improved access to effective, integrated and coordinated health care services. Through a unique combination of advanced education and clinical practice, advanced nursing practice roles make an important and positive impact on the health of clients.

In New Brunswick two advanced nursing practice roles are recognized: the nurse practitioner (NP) in primary health care and the clinical nurse specialist (CNS).

Nurse Practitioner: Definition

A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse (RN) who meets the requirements for registration with the Nurses Association of New Brunswick to practice as a nurse practitioner. The NP has completed a nurse practitioner program in primary health care at a graduate level, and has advanced knowledge and clinical expertise in assessment, diagnosis and health care management. The nurse practitioner in primary health care is a generalist who offers comprehensive and continuous care to clients across the health continuum and throughout the client’s lifespan. Primary health care services include health promotion, disease and injury prevention, curative, rehabilitative and supportive services to individuals, families and communities in all health settings.

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1 The client is defined as individual, family, groups and community.
2 The title nurse practitioner or NP is a protected title, meaning individuals not on NANB’s NP register are not permitted to use the NP title.
3 CNSs are not regulated differently than RNs, thus the title clinical nurse specialist or CNS is not a protected title in NB.
NP Scope of Practice

The NP role is grounded in advanced nursing practice. The NP demonstrates depth and breadth of knowledge, synthesis of data and use of complex skills and interventions. The NP is authorized to diagnose or assess a disease, disorder or condition, and communicate the diagnosis or assessment to the client; order and interpret screening and diagnostic tests; select, prescribe and monitor the effectiveness of drugs; and order the application of forms of energy. This authority is what makes the practice of the nurse practitioner different from that of all other registered nurses. Since the NP performs activities that are not part of the scope of practice of a registered nurse, additional regulation is required. NPs also provide leadership, act as consultants, researchers and educators, and incorporate new knowledge from research studies and other sources into their practice.

Clinical Nurse Specialist: Definition

The clinical nurse specialist (CNS) is a registered nurse who holds a master’s or doctoral degree in nursing with expertise in a clinical nursing specialty. The CNS’s practice is based on in-depth knowledge of nursing and other sciences gained through graduate nursing education and clinical experience. The work of CNSs advances the profession by contributing to the development of nursing knowledge and evidence-based practice and by promoting excellence in clinical practice. CNSs bring value to clients and to the health care team, with the potential to improve safety for clients, promote positive health outcomes and reduce costs.

CNS Scope of Practice

The CNS role is grounded in advanced nursing and exemplifies the full scope of practice of the registered nurse. CNSs provide evidence-based nursing care and assist in providing solutions in complex health situations through education, consultation and direct care of clients, and through education, consultation, and collaboration with RNs, colleagues in other disciplines, administrators and policy-makers. CNSs are leaders in the development of clinical guidelines and protocols, and promote the use of evidence, provide expert support and consultation, and facilitate system change. There are five interrelated components of the CNS role: practitioner, educator, consultant, researcher and leader, which will vary according to the needs of the clients and the organization.

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References


