
NURSES MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MISSOURI'S PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM



NEW ADMINISTRATOR ORIENTATION

JULY 29, 2025

Martha Smith, MSN, RN
State Director, Maternal and Child Health / State Lead, Public Health Nursing
Division of Community & Public Health

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING



- Lillian Wald is the founder of Public Health Nursing in the U.S.
- First to use the term 'public health nursing'
- Vision of nurses as guardians of the public's health
- Established the Henry Street Nurse's Settlement
- Visiting Nurse Service of New York

PROMOTING GOOD WHILE PREVENTING HARM

APHA Definition of Public Health Nursing

Public health nursing is the practice of promoting and protecting the health of populations using knowledge from nursing, social, and public health sciences.

American Nurses Association Definition of Public Health Nursing

A focus on population health through continuous surveillance and assessment of the multiple determinants of health with the intent to promote health and wellness; prevent disease, disability, and premature death; and improve neighborhood quality of life.

Elements of Public Health Nursing Practice

- 1) a focus on the health needs of an entire population, including inequities and the unique needs of sub-populations;
- 2) assessment of population health using a comprehensive, systematic approach;
- 3) attention to multiple determinants of health;
- 4) an emphasis on primary prevention; and
- 5) application of interventions at all levels—individuals, families, communities, and the systems that impact their health.



Ten Ways Public Health Nurses (PHNs) Improve Health

Optimal health is largely the result of a person's social and physical environments. As the largest segment of the health care workforce and the most trusted profession, nurses are leading the way to transform health and health care by focusing on the social determinants of health and the places where people live, learn, work, worship and play.

PHNs advance the health of individuals, families and communities using a distinct skill set. This skill set includes consistent utilization of the nursing process; application of critical thinking skills; and decision-making informed by science and evidence. These unique skills overlay all of the "Ten Ways" that PHNs improve health as described below.

1

Prevent

PHNs work inside and outside clinic walls to prevent conditions such as obesity, diabetes, injuries, school absenteeism, infant mortality, and spread of communicable diseases.

2

Educate

PHNs educate individuals, families, communities and stakeholders about healthy behaviors, environments, and policies that make the healthy choice the easy choice.

3

Coordinate

PHNs coordinate and integrate care and services across the lifespan to improve individual and population health outcomes, improve health equity and reduce costs.

4

Protect

PHNs protect people by educating about environmental hazards, preparing for emergencies and mobilizing during disasters.

5

Lead

PHNs lead evidence-based quality practice and policy changes. They lead cross-sector and transdisciplinary collaborations that impact communities.

6

Promote

PHNs promote health equity and health as a shared value through individual and community engagement and inclusion.

7

Advocate

PHNs advocate for community assets that lead to healthier people such as safe and affordable housing, healthy school meals, tobacco prevention policies, safe places to walk and bike, access to healthy food, appropriate behavioral health treatment services, violence prevention and trauma informed care.

8

Care

PHNs care for people, families, and communities. They understand the importance of culture, language, literacy, and how these shape health, well-being and equity.

9

Integrate

PHNs recognize that health is a function of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. They assist individuals and communities in integrating a variety of needed services through collaborating, mobilizing and leading interdisciplinary teams, partners and consumers.

10

Research

PHNs use research to inform their practice and do research to improve health of the individual, family and community.

A word cloud centered around the profession of Public Health Nurses. The central text 'Public Health Nurses' is the largest and most prominent. Surrounding it are various public health topics and interventions, each in a different color and size. The colors used include shades of blue, green, yellow, orange, red, and purple. The topics are arranged in a circular pattern around the central text, with some overlapping. The largest words are 'Public Health Nurses', 'COVID-19', 'Family', 'Prevention', 'Education', 'Maternal & Women's Health', 'Breast & Cervical Cancer', 'Immunizations', 'Mental Health', 'Policy', 'Epidemiology', 'Rural Health', 'Breastfeeding', 'Food Safety', 'Lead Safety', 'Communicable Disease Prevention', 'Violence & Suicide Prevention', 'Asthma Prevention', 'Newborn Screening', 'Drinking Water', 'Addiction', 'Leadership', 'Sanitation', 'Tobacco Cessation', 'Emergency Preparedness', 'Occupational Health', 'Environmental Hazards', 'Climate Change', 'School Health', and 'Tobacco Cessation'.

Public Health Nurses

COVID-19

Family

Prevention

Education

Maternal & Women's Health

Breast & Cervical Cancer

Immunizations

Mental Health

Policy

Epidemiology

Rural Health

Breastfeeding

Food Safety

Lead Safety

Communicable Disease Prevention

Violence & Suicide Prevention

Asthma Prevention

Newborn Screening

Drinking Water

Addiction

Leadership

Sanitation

Tobacco Cessation

Emergency Preparedness

Occupational Health

Environmental Hazards

Climate Change

School Health

COMPETENT PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING PRACTICE



Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations

- Formed in 1991
- Originally known as the Quad Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations
- Focused on unifying and amplifying the authoritative voice of public health nurses
- Member Organizations
 - American Public Health Association (APHA) Public Health Nursing Section
 - Association of Public Health Nurses (APHN)
 - Rural Nurse Organization
 - National Association of School Nurses (NASN)
 - Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments (ANHE)
 - Association of Community Health Nursing Educators (ACHNE)

COMMUNITY/PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING COMPETENCIES

- Community/Public Health Nursing [C/PHN] Competencies (Quad Council Coalition, 2018)
 - Guide three levels of practice
 - Tier one: generalist
 - Tier two: management or supervisory
 - Tier three: senior management or leadership
 - Consistent with the APHA PHN Section definition of Public Health Nursing and the ANA Scope and Standards of Public Health Nursing
 - May be used at all levels of practice and in a variety of practice settings
 - Useful to guide and revolutionize practice, education, research, and policy at all levels
 - Represent the continuum of evolving PHN practice roles, responsibilities, and functions

C/PHN COMPETENCY DOMAINS

- Domain 1: Assessment and Analytic Skills
- Domain 2: Policy Development/Program Planning Skills
- Domain 3: Communication Skills
- Domain 4: Cultural Competency Skills
- Domain 5: Community Dimensions of Practice Skills
- Domain 6: Public Health Sciences Skills
- Domain 7: Financial Planning, Evaluation, and Management Skills
- Domain 8: Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

https://www.cphno.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/QCC-C-PHN-COMPETENCIES-Approved_2018.05.04_Final-002.pdf

MPHA SECTION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

- Membership
 - Public health nurses and students enrolled in a school of nursing
 - current members of MPHA
 - Individual
 - Organizational
- State affiliate of APHA
- Annual Public Health Nursing Awards
 - Public Health Nurse
 - Public Health Nurse Leader
 - https://mopha.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/publichealthnursingawardapplication-2024_651.pdf
 - Trina Teacutter, Secretary, MPHA-Section for Public Health Nursing, trina.teacutter@como.gov
 - Nomination deadline: August 1st

MISSOURI COMMUNITY OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING PRACTICE

- Mission: to use communal learning, expertise, and knowledge to achieve shared goals and advance the practice of public health nursing in Missouri.
 - Regularly scheduled statewide and regional community of practice meetings
 - Lifelong Learning & Professional Development (Individual & Collective)
 - Generate and manage a body of knowledge for members to draw on
 - Promote standardization of practice
 - Provide a forum for public health nurses to:
 - Discuss information and questions about specific problems from everyday professional life and find solutions together.
 - Share mutual support and collaboration.
 - Share individual experiences with one another and, as a result, create new opportunities and master specific challenges.
 - Cross knowledge boundaries.
 - Innovate and create new ideas, knowledge and practices.
- Join Mailing List: <https://www.missouristate.edu/OPHI/SPHN/cop.htm#join>

PHN COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE RESOURCES

Learning Session

Learn about the community of practice.

PRESENTATION (.PDF)

PHN Manual

Standards, practices, policies and more.

PHN MANUAL (.PDF)

PHN Brochure

About public health nurses and what they do.

PHN BROCHURE (.PDF)

Opportunities

Job and career opportunities for public health nurses.

EXPLORE CAREER POSSIBILITIES

PHN Educators

Guide to developing preceptor programs.

PRECEPTOR HANDBOOK

Resource List

Websites, organizations and training tools.

GET THE LIST

<https://www.missouristate.edu/OPHI/SPHN/phn-resources.htm>

REFERENCES

- APHN
 - <https://www.phnurse.org/>
- The Future of Nursing 2020-2030 Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity
 - <https://www.phnurse.org/assets/docs/FON%20Valuing%20Community%20and%20Public%20Health%20Nursing.pdf>
- Public Health Nursing: Key to Our Nation's Health
 - National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice (NACNEP) 12th Annual Report to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Congress of the United States, Executive Summary
 - https://www.cphno.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2015_NACNEP-PHN-Key-to-Our-Nations-Health-1.pdf
- The Public Health Nurse: Necessary Partner for the Future of Healthy Communities A Position Paper of the Association of Public Health Nurses (APHN Position Paper, 2016)
 - https://www.cphno.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/APHN-PHN-Value-Position-P_APPROVED-5.30.2016-1.pdf



QUESTIONS?

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

MARTHA SMITH

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

MARTHA.SMITH@HEALTH.MO.GOV

573-751-6435

