

INTRODUCTION



The purpose of the North Carolina Public Health Nurse Manual is and always has been to support Public Health Nurses (PHNs) practicing in NC local health departments. The NC PHN Manual was first published in 1986 for use by all public health nurses in North Carolina. It was originally and continues to be based on current public health nursing philosophy and principles. The material included will be familiar to those of you who have been practicing in public health; however, because this is a “living” document, we believe it will still be useful to seasoned PHNs. In 2017, the NC PHN manual moved from a paper bound document to an electronic version located at <https://ncpublichealthnursing.org>.

The goals of the NC PHN Manual are to:

- serve as a guide and resource to be used in concert with other program specific manuals for planning and/or implementing services and/or programs,
- improve the quality of public health nursing services provided in NC local health departments,
- be a “living” working document as it is always a “work in progress” with a mechanism for Public Health Nurses to provide input into needed changes, deletions, or additions.

The NC PHN Manual is based on a common definition of Public Health Nursing and a well-defined set of scope and standards that reflects Public Health Nursing Practice. The following content was used in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the NC PHN Manual:

Public Health Nursing, as defined by the American Public Health Association’s (APHA) Public Health Nursing Section (2013), is:

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

The APHA PHN definition is used as the basis for the Quad Council Coalition of Public Health Nursing Organization’s [Community/Public Health Nursing Competencies](#) (QCC C/PHN; 2018), a useful public health nursing competency set grounded in the public health sciences. The definition is also used as the basis for the American Nurses Association’s [Public Health Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 2nd Ed.](#) (2013) and includes practice competencies grounded in the nursing sciences.

The manual includes the following contents:

1. **What is Public Health Nursing** – provides the definitions and scope of standards of public health nursing.
2. **Confidentiality** - provides general information and resources related to NC Confidentiality Laws and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
3. **Continuing Education** – provides additional educational requirements as an employed PHN to function in specialty roles, NC Board of Nursing requirements for licensure, and Public Health Nursing Institute for Nursing Excellence.
4. **Educational Requirements for Public Health Nursing** – provides requirements related to the NC Administrative Code to work as a NC PHN.

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5. **Pharmacy** – describes the NC laws and rules and training requirements for Public Health Nurses to dispense drugs and devices to support public health needs.
6. **Policy and Procedure Development** – provides information on the use of an agency Policy on Policies that guides the development, implementation, review, revision and staff training needs for all organizational Policies and Procedures.
7. **Practical Applications, Tips and Guidelines for Writing Policies and Procedures** – provides practical applications and suggestions on how to write policies and procedures using best practice methods and references.
8. **Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance** – provides information on the statutory requirements for quality improvement and quality assurance in NC public health departments and resources to support quality improvement initiatives.
9. **Standing Orders** – provides information on the statutory requirements governing the use of standing orders and tools and resources to write nursing standing orders.

Since the first edition of the manual the Chief Nurse, Public Health Nurse Professional Development Unit (PHNPDU), and public health nurses from the local level have been a part of the development, implementation, and evaluation of the NC PHN Manual. The PHNPDU has worked diligently through research, review, and change of formats to revise this manual. As you view the 2020 version of the *NC PHN Manual*, please take time to provide feedback. Your feedback can be provided on the [North Carolina Public Health Nursing website](#) under comment section on the bottom of each page.