



## NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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### NCCPHN-PLAN: Preparing Leaders for Achievement in Nursing

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, with input from local health departments and schools of nursing, creates and maintains an introductory course in principles and practices of public health and public health nursing to meet requirements in the NC Administrative Code (NCAC). Public health nurses employed by a local health department (LHD) shall complete the introductory course per the NCAC Rules listed below in the Authority Requirements. The NC Credentialed Public Health Nurse (NCCPHN) Course fulfills this requirement. The course ensures that all NC public health nurses working in state or local governmental public health agencies have access to current evidence-based information on the public health nursing specialty's scope and standards of practice.

The FY25 Consolidated Agreement requires that the Division of Public Health (DPH) Office of the Chief Public Health Nurse (OCPHN), and the North Carolina Institute for Public Health (NCIPH), in partnership with LHD lead public health nurse administrators (LNA), develop a statewide plan for all registered nurses working in LHD public health nurse positions to complete the North Carolina Credentialed Public Health Nurse Course by 2027. A work group of OCPHN Nurse Consultants and LHD lead public health nurse administrators from large, mid-size, small, urban, and rural health departments convened and developed a statewide plan and toolkit titled NCCPHN-PLAN: Preparing Leaders for Achievement in Nursing. To satisfy the associated FY25 Consolidated Agreement LHD responsibility, every LHD lead nurse administrator must develop an agency-specific plan and complete an online NCCPHN-PLAN LHD Attestation Form by June 30, 2025.

#### Authority requirements:

- **FY25 Consolidated Agreement**

By June 30, 2025, all LHD lead public health nurse administrators will have developed a plan in partnership with the DPH Office of the Chief Public Health Nurse (OCPHN) and North Carolina Institute for Public Health (NCIPH) to have all registered nurses working in public health nurse positions complete the North Carolina Credentialed Public Health Nurse Course by 2027.

- **10a North Carolina Administrative Code 46 .0301(2)**

All public health nurses employed by a local health department shall:

(a) Hold an active and unencumbered license to practice as a registered nurse in the State of North Carolina in accordance with 21 NCAC 36, which is hereby incorporated by reference, including any subsequent amendments and editions, and available free of charge at <http://reports.oah.state.nc.us/ncac.asp>;

(b) Complete an introductory course in principles and practices of public health and public health nursing sponsored by the Department and developed by the Department with input from local health departments and schools of nursing. Public health nurses employed by a local health department after the effective date of this Rule shall complete the introductory course within one year of employment with the local health department. Public health nurses employed by a local health department on the effective date of this Rule who have not completed the

introductory course or who completed it prior to January 1, 2023, shall complete the introductory course by December 31, 2027; and

(c) Complete within three years of first publication each public health nursing refresher course sponsored by the Department following the public health nurse's completion of the introductory course required in Sub-item (2)(b) of this Rule. Refresher courses shall be published on the Division of Public Health's website at <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/local-health-departments> and be based on the American Nurses Association's Public Health Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 3rd edition and any subsequent amendments or editions, which is incorporated by reference and available at <https://www.nursingworld.org/nurses-books/> at a cost of thirty-eight dollars and ninety-five cents (\$38.95).

NCCPHN Course information can be found on the NC Institute for Public Health course webpage: <https://sph.unc.edu/nciph/nccphn/> or the DPH NCCPHN Program webpage: <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/local-and-community-support-health-departments/office-chief-public-health-nurse/nc-credentialed-public-health-nurse-program>.

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## **Steps/Responsibilities for Developing and Implementing the NCCPHN-PLAN**

### **OCPHN -**

1. Disseminate the NCCPHN-PLAN LHD Attestation Form to collect staffing information to inform registration allotments, names of local points of contact (POCs), and the LHD attestation statement.
2. Disseminate a toolkit for Lead Nurse Administrators (LNAs), nursing supervisors, and NCCPHN POCs that includes: (1) an Excel document to list staff priority for registration with scheduling templates, and (2) an FAQ tip sheet to share ideas from LHDs who have been successful in overcoming the barriers with nurse registration.
3. Offer optional office hours to introduce the toolkit and answer questions regarding implementing the NCCPHN-PLAN at the local level.
4. Determine the number of registration allotments for each LHD using a course completion percentage heat map and share that number with local POCs.
5. Send a priority registration survey before each open registration period to ensure that nurses who urgently need the course are permitted to register early.
6. Communicate with LNAs, nurse supervisors, and POCs regarding cohort registration dates.

### **The LHD -**

1. LHDs will assign a point of contact (POC) to develop and maintain a list of nurses who need the course and create a priority list to guide local registration.
2. LHDs will share the POC's information with the OCPHN (see #6 below) and send updates to their OCPHN regional nurse consultant when the POCs change.
3. LHDs will use the NCCPHN-PLAN toolkit provided by OCPHN, which includes resources to help them establish registration priorities in compliance with the North Carolina Administrative Code.
4. The POC should work with the lead nurse administrator (LNA) and nurse supervisors to determine which staff should register for each cohort.
5. POCs will communicate with local LHD nurses who should register in each cohort based on the number of open registrations allotted for their county for each cohort.

6. **By June 30, 2025, the LHD LNA or delegate will complete the NCCPHN-PLAN LHD Attestation Form** confirming the LHD's
- completion of the development of the LHD-specific RN priority list and commitment to updating the list as PHN staff change,
  - POC name and email address,
  - total number of PHN classified positions (including vacant positions), and
  - total number of PHNs who have completed the NCCPHN Course and are Credentialed Public Health Nurses ([Graduate Roster](#)).

**The NCCPHN-PLAN LHD Attestation Form can be found at:**

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/6AVJuK4wkc>

#### **Course Registration Priority Order -**

Each NCCPHN Course capacity is 150 public health nurses. The course is offered four times per year, with a capacity to enroll 600 public health nurses annually. OCPHN has worked with the NCIPH staff to create a priority order for course registration:

1. Registered nurses who are enrolled in or planning to enroll in an Enhanced Role Registered Nurse training program and who need the NCCPHN Course as a co- or pre-requisite for that program. Currently rostered ERRNs do not fit the criteria for this priority group.
2. Registered nurses in public health nurse positions in their first 12 months of employment, regardless of type of nursing degree (Diploma, ADN, BSN, MSN, etc.). Public health nurses employed by an LHD after 1/1/2025 shall complete the introductory course within one year of employment with the local health department.
3. Registered nurses in public health nursing positions employed by LHDs who do not fit one of the above groups and have not taken the NCCPHN course. All LHD PHNs will complete the course per NCAC requirements.

**To meet NCAC requirements, the NCCPHN Course can only enroll RNs in public health nurse positions at this time. Nurse Practitioners, Health Directors holding RN licensure, and any RNs not working in a public health nurse position will not be permitted to enroll until the NCAC requirements are fulfilled.**