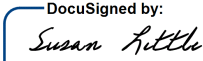


Division of Public Health Administrative Manual

Chapter: General Administration
Title: Use of Public Health Nursing Credentials
Signature: 
Current Effective Date: 11/6/2023
Revision History: 0
Original Effective Date: 11/6/2023



PURPOSE

The purpose of the Use of Public Health Nursing Credentials is to provide consistent guidance regarding the use of the “CPHN” and “ERRN” credentials. The following are procedures for the use of these credentials.

POLICY

The Public Health Nursing (PHN) Credentialing Unit, a functional unit of the Office of the Chief Public Health Nurse (OCPHN), provides oversight for both the NC Credentialed Public Health Nurse (NCCPHN) and the Enhanced Role Registered Nurse (ERRN) training and rostering programs. The NCCPHN and ERRN programs approve the use of specific credentials for NC governmental PHNs who have completed all program-specific educational, practice, documentation, and competency verification requirements.

DEFINITIONS

Competence – The ability to practice nursing that meets the needs of clients cared for using logical thinking and accurate nursing skills. A complex integration of knowledge including professional judgment, skills, values, and attitude. It is an intelligent practical skillset that integrates or combines different factors and issues in complex ways, specific to each circumstance¹, and is grounded in the Nursing Process² and the Nursing Practice Act.³

Credentialed – Credentialing is a term applied to processes used to designate that an individual has met established standards set by an agent (governmental or non-governmental) recognized as qualified to carry out this task. Credentials are marks or “stamps” of quality and achievement communicating to employers, payers, and consumers what to expect from a “credentialed” nurse. Credentials may be periodically renewed as a means of assuring continued quality and they may be withdrawn when standards of competence or behavior are no longer met.⁴

Enhanced Role Registered Nurse (ERRN) – Local Health Department Registered Nurse who has completed post-licensure continuing education and continuing competency requirements in

¹ Fakuda, M. (2018). Nursing competency: Definition, structure, and development. *Journal of Medical Sciences*, 61(1): 1–7. doi: [10.33160/yam.2018.03.001](https://doi.org/10.33160/yam.2018.03.001)

² American Nurses Association, *The Nursing Process*. <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/workforce/what-is-nursing/the-nursing-process/>

³ NC Nursing Practice Act. https://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/byarticle/chapter_90/article_9a.html

⁴ American Nurses Credentialing Center, Credentialing Definitions, <https://www.nursingworld.org/education-events/faculty-resources/research-grants/styles-credentialing-research-grants/credentialing-definitions/>

Division of Public Health Administrative Manual

Chapter:	General Administration
Title:	Use of Public Health Nursing Credentials
Current Effective Date:	11/6/2023

an area approved by NC Medicaid and the Division of Public Health. The enhanced nursing services provided by ERRNs fall within the legal scope of a Registered Nurse per the NC Nursing Practice Act. Each subspecialty (Child Health, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program, and Maternal Health, and Family Planning) has individual program policies and protocols governing training and continuing competence requirements. Must be a Registered Nurse.

Credentialed Public Health Nurse (CPHN) – NC Governmental Public Health Nurse who has completed post-licensure continuing education and continuing competency requirements as defined by the NCCPHN Program. Must be a Registered Nurse.

Roster – A list of PHNs who have completed all educational, practice, and documentation requirements to actively function in a specific ERRN role.

Standards – Authoritative statements by which the nursing profession describes the responsibilities for which its practitioners are accountable. Standards reflect the values and priorities of the profession and provide direction for professional nursing practice and a framework for the evaluation of this practice. They also define the nursing profession's accountability to the public and the outcomes for which registered nurses are responsible.⁵

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Office of the Chief Public Health Nurse PHN Credentialing Unit will

1. Maintain a process for credential verification (such as a website portal or request process).
2. Update the credential verification resource when instructed by the program managers.
3. Provide written instructions on how to display credentials (for uniformity across the profession).

Each program is required to have the following policies and procedures related the use of the credential as part of their program manuals and resources and provided to aspirant and credentialed PHNs:

1. Protocols regarding how a PHN achieves approval to use the credential.
2. Methods used to approve an individual's use of the credential, including the program-specific educational, practice, documentation, and competency verification requirements that must be met for a PHN to qualify to carry out the role and associated tasks.
3. Clear and transparent communication about what the credential means, who is permitted to use it, and the requirements the PHN must meet to maintain approved use of the credential.

⁵ Ibid.

Division of Public Health Administrative Manual

Chapter: General Administration
Title: Use of Public Health Nursing Credentials
Current Effective Date: 11/6/2023

4. Protocols related to suspension/reinstatement of credentials when continuing competence requirements have not been met due to FMLA, failure to complete required continuing ed, etc.
5. Protocols related to the withdrawing of approval for a PHN to use the credential.
6. Protocols to monitor and enforce misuse –including revocation and a referral to the appropriate licensing board (linked to licensure requirements, such as a violation of the code of ethics).

PROCEDURES

The Registered Nurse is approved to use the “ERRN” credential as part of their legal nursing signature when they have completed initial training and continuing competency requirements specific to the subspecialty. The subspecialty (CH, STD, MH, FP, BCCCP) is not approved to be included in the written or displayed ERRN credential.

The Registered Nurse is approved to use the “CPHN” credential as part of their legal nursing signature when they have completed the initial NCCPHN course. To maintain approval to use the CPHN credential, the RN must complete all required continuing education per the Chief Public Health Nurse.

REFERENCES

- OCPHN and Programmatic NC Enhanced Role Registered Nurse Programs Agreement Policies
- Programmatic-Specific Enhanced Role Registered Nurse Policy/Protocols
- American Nurses Association (2013). How to display your credentials.
<https://www.nursingworld.org/%7E48fdf9/globalassets/certification/renewals/how-to-display-your-credentials>

For questions or clarification on any of the information contained in this policy, please contact the NC DHHS Chief Public Health Nurse.

Document History

Initial approval: 11/6/2023
 Revision: ___/___/___
 Revision: ___/___/___