

## Nursing Notes

### DDS Nursing Newsletter Introduced

The word "newsletter" is generally defined as a short, informational publication that is periodically circulated to a group with common interests. Within the elements identified in this definition, lies the purpose for this offering entitled *DDS Nursing Notes*. This publication is intended to provide another resource for communicating information to assist RNs, LPNs, and APRNs who provide care and support to persons served by the department. *DDS Nursing Notes* will address health and nursing practice issues that are identified as part of the department's quality assurance processes as well as providing coverage of such topics as DDS health policies and procedures, informational resources, health related training opportunities, and clinical practice updates. *DDS Nursing Notes* will also report on best practice standards of care in the area of DD nursing to assist nurses to improve the quality of their nursing practice and ultimately the care provided to consumers.

### One Label Does Not Fit All- Nursing Scope Of Practice

The generic term "nurse" is frequently used when talking about the licensed nurse who provides health care supports to consumers. There is sometimes confusion about what each type of licensed nurse can and can't do. These scope of practice issues are frequently identified in licensing and mortality reviews and therefore, it is worthwhile to provide a brief refresher on the manner in which nursing licenses are issued in the state of Connecticut. This explanation will serve as a reminder to nurses and a source of clarification for non-nurses.

Three types of nursing licenses are issued in CT based upon educational preparation and examination. They are Registered Nurse (RN), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN). For each nursing license a scope of practice has been promulgated in law. The Connecticut Board of Examiners for Nursing expects that nurses understand the limitations of their unique scope of practice and do not exceed

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## One Label Does Not Fit All- Nursing Scope Of Practice Issues (cont.)

those limitations based upon an agency's or other party's job description for the nurse.

- **RNs** are prepared and licensed to perform assessments of persons in their care, diagnose human responses to actual or potential health problems, develop and implement plans of care, and review and evaluate the effectiveness of the plans on a continuing basis. They provide clinical oversight/ direction to LPNs, and can delegate responsibility for the performance of certain nursing tasks/ responsibilities to trained non-licensed staff according to the standards identified by the Nursing Board. RNs execute the medical regimen under the direction of a licensed physician, dentist, or APRN.
- **LPNs** are prepared and licensed to perform selected tasks and to share responsibility for the implementation of the care plan under the direction of the RN or APRN. LPNs can contribute to the assessment performed by the RN through observation and the collection of data but they are not permitted to perform assessments. This distinction means that LPNs **cannot** serve as a "nurse on call". LPNs are permitted to execute the medical regimen under the direction of a licensed physician or dentist, which includes receiving orders, but the LPN is required to notify the RN or APRN prior to implementation as the changes may impact the care plan. LPNs can provide required health trainings and can delegate responsibilities as identified by the RN, but they cannot participate in the DDS medication certification process unless they have received the required training and authorization from the department.
- **APRNs** are prepared and licensed to diagnose illness and to prescribe medications and treatments. In this capacity, they work in collaboration with licensed physicians. APRNs can also provide clinical supervision and direction to LPNs.

Nurses /others who have questions about their/the nurses scope of practice and/or the appropriateness of their/the nurses ability to perform certain nursing responsibilities should consult the Dept. of Public Health at 860-509-7648 or 860-509-7624 and/or these documents: Nurse Practice Act, Declaratory Ruling on LPN Scope of Practice, Declaratory Ruling on Delegation, and Decision Making Model for nurses which can be accessed at:

[http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3143&q=388910&dphNav\\_GID=1830](http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3143&q=388910&dphNav_GID=1830)

### **Congratulations!!!!**

**CONGRATULATIONS** are in order to the following nurses who demonstrated their expertise in the area of Developmental Disabilities Nursing by successfully passing the certification examination administered by the Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association:

**Mary Alice Pelletier RN CDDN Key Services**

**Michelle Lionetti RN CDDN DDS, West Region**

**Mary Evans RN CDDN, DDS, South Region**

There may be more nurses that we should recognize for this accomplishment, but DDNA has a policy that they do not release the names of the nurses who take or pass the examination. If you have also achieved this professional milestone, contact Eileen Gamba so we can recognize you!

## Speaking of Nursing Notes....

Mention the words "nursing documentation" around any group of nurses and you can almost hear the collective groan. Nursing publications frequently feature articles that address the frustration of nurses around the time consuming task of writing nursing notes. Because this component of the nursing role is so critical, there are also numerous articles and books that address the legal pitfalls that may occur when nurses fail to document or document inadequately.

Nursing documentation is intended to record the observations made, data collected, assessments performed, and the care and interventions provided by the licensed nurse. It reflects the nurse's implementation of, or contribution to, the nursing process. This documentation is often used as an indicator of the standard of care provided by the nurse to the person as it reflects the critical thinking, judgment, and action taken by the nurse. Nursing notes are a timeless way for the nurse to communicate whether the documentation is read the day it is written or one year later. A lack of nursing documentation is generally interpreted to indicate that no care was provided to a person. This may not be the case. Inadequate nursing documentation often does not represent the actual level of care and intervention provided to the person by the nurse. In both these instances, the nurse may have provided excellent nursing care but her/his failure to communicate this information may place that nurse at risk.

The DDS Nursing Standard (#96-3) on Documentation identifies the expectation for nursing documentation of the care provided to consumers of the department. This standard and the accompanying nursing documentation guidelines can be found on the DDS website by clicking on "Supports and Services" then "Health and Clinical Services", and then "Nursing Standards". This standard is currently under revision so as to address recent technological advances and update information as appropriate. The DDS basic expectation is that RNs, LPNs, and APRNs will provide documentation of their involvement in supporting the health care needs of the consumers served by the department as this is a best practice standard of nursing care. If you have questions, please see Page 4 .

## Sign Up to Receive This Newsletter

In order for this newsletter to be the communication tool that we envision it to be, we need to reach those nurses who support our consumers. To accomplish this, we need your help. If you are a nurse who works for DDS, you will automatically receive this newsletter from the Public Service Nursing Director or Health Services Director. If you work in the private sector, you may receive this newsletter through your nursing director/supervisor, or from the Executive Director of your agency. You can sign up to electronically receive this newsletter by contacting Eileen Gamba at [eileen.gamba@ct.gov](mailto:eileen.gamba@ct.gov) 860-418-6084 or Julie Bouchard at [julie.bouchard@ct.gov](mailto:julie.bouchard@ct.gov) 860-418-6050. If you do not have access to electronic mail, it can be faxed to you. Please pass this newsletter on to nurses you know who are in the field and encourage them to sign up. Issues of this newsletter will also be available on the DDS website.

**Look for the next issue of *DDS Nursing Notes* around December 1st!**

## How do I find.... Who do I call... ?

Searching for the answer to a question about DDS health/nursing requirements or looking for a particular DDS health/nursing form can seem like a daunting task when you do not know who might be able to help. Public sector nurses can contact their nursing supervisor or the regional Public Services Nursing Directors. Nurses working in the private sector can contact:

### **Regional Directors of Health Services**

|               |                     |                            |               |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| <u>North:</u> | Doreen McGrath      | Doreen.McGrath@ct.gov      | 860- 263-2462 |
| <u>West:</u>  | Gary Durante        | Gary.Durante@ct.gov        | 203- 806-8751 |
| <u>South:</u> | Patricia Rynkiewicz | Patricia.Rynkiewicz@ct.gov | 203-294-5079  |

### **Regional Nurse Consultants/ Liaisons to Private Sector Nurses**

|               |                    |                           |              |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| <u>North:</u> | Patricia Lilley    | Patricia.Lilley@ct.gov    | 860-263-2530 |
| <u>West:</u>  | Lilarose Hulton    | Lilarose.Hulton@ct.gov    | 203-455-3178 |
|               | Janette Steward    | Janette.Steward@ct.gov    | 203-806-8725 |
| <u>South:</u> | FrancesPark        | Frances.Park@ct.gov       | 860-859-5489 |
|               | Celeste Fassbender | Celeste.Fassbender@ct.gov | 203-294-5089 |

### **Central Office Resources:**

|                       |  |                              |              |
|-----------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------|
| David Carlow          | DDS Director of Health and Clinical Services   | David.Carlow@ct.gov          | 860-418-6083 |
| Eileen Gamba          | Nurse Consultant                               | Eileen.Gamba@ct.gov          | 860-418-6084 |
| Valerie Vujs          | Medication Certification Coordinator           | Valerie.Vujs@ct.gov          | 860-418-6135 |
| Izabella Pulvermacher | Dental Coordinator                             | Izabella.Pulvermacher@ct.gov | 860-418-6099 |
| Karen Huntington      | Utilization Review Coordinator- Long Term Care | Karen.Huntington@ct.gov      | 860-418-8725 |

**SAVE THE DATE: CTDDNA Conference on Sexuality and Persons With Intellectual Disabilities on October 16th. Contact Eileen Gamba**