

THE NURSING PROFESSION:

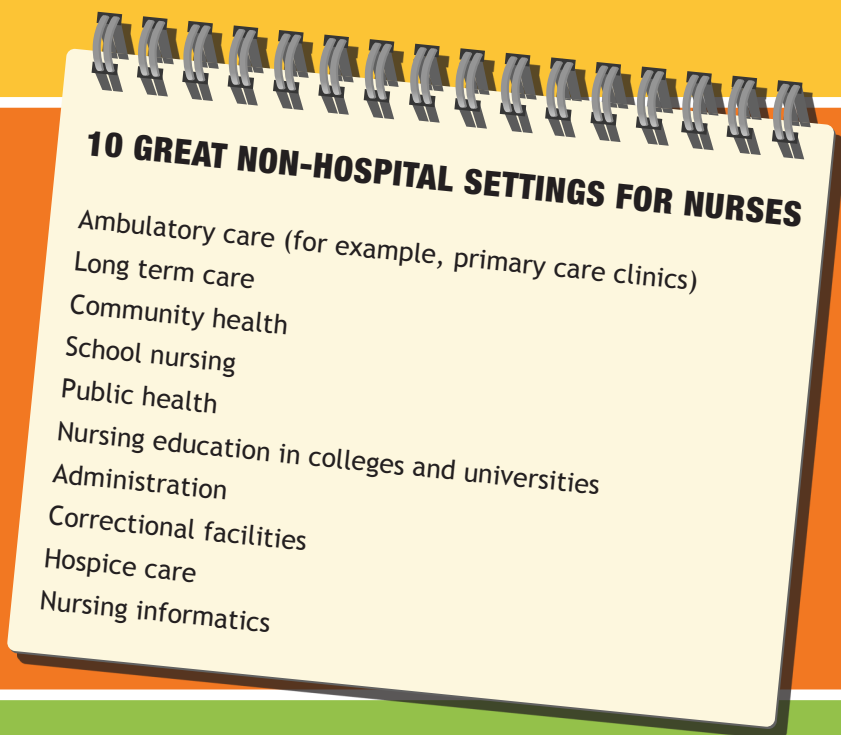
Roles beyond the hospital



Nursing is the largest healthcare profession in our state as well as in the nation. Chances are that a nurse has cared for you or someone you know in a hospital, which is an acute-care setting. In these settings, patients receive active but short-term treatment for a severe injury, an episode of an illness, an urgent medical condition or during recovery from surgery.

But did you know the women and men who are registered nurses serve all communities, and work in various non-acute care settings around the country? Examples of non-acute care settings include clinics, long-term care, community health, schools and public health.

Nurses' work is exciting and rewarding, because no matter the setting, nurses help people be as healthy as possible. We talked to several nurses who work in non-acute care settings around Washington and asked them about their roles and responsibilities. Hear what they had to say and see if you can picture yourself in any of the roles.



ARE ANY OF THESE SPECIALTIES CALLING YOUR NAME?

There is a high need for skilled, knowledgeable and motivated nurses who represent all ethnic groups and other underrepresented populations.

Learning to be a nurse

After you graduate from high school, you will have a few paths to becoming a registered nurse.

You can go to a university for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. Like the BSN graduates, students who complete an Associate's Degree in nursing at a community or technical college can take the NCLEX-RN, earning them a nursing license. Getting a Bachelor's in nursing is important because the additional education provides more preparation to care for an increasingly complex patient population. Having a BSN also provides more career opportunities.

You can also start a nursing career by becoming a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) first. LPNs usually earn their degree at a community or technical college, pass the NCLEX-PN exam, and work under the supervision of an RN or physician. Earning an LPN takes less time than an Associate or Bachelor's degree.

Keep in mind that no matter which route you take in nursing, your unique knowledge, skills and abilities will help others and ensure our communities are healthier!

Want to know more? The Washington Center for Nursing is your go-to source for a career in nursing. Visit us at www.WCNursing.org or email us at Info@wcnursing.org

GATE ARMSTRONG

A licensed practical nurse in a health clinic

What are your top three responsibilities that you would highlight?

- Patient care is always #1! As the clinical staff lead, I try to impress upon all of the staff how important it is to treat all the patients as if they were your own family member or yourself.
- Healthy Planet Program (population health). I work to do my part in meeting my organization's commitment to reduce and prevent chronic illnesses such as diabetes, cancer, and preventing disease through immunizations.
- Making sure the staff (back and front office) and providers are working together as a care team.

What's something that might surprise others about your role?

While I can't do as much as a registered nurse, I am making so much positive impact on patients and on for the organization I work for. LPNs are a crucial part of the health care team!

YOLANDA FONG

A supervisor of Chronic Disease Prevention with public health

How would you describe a "day in the life" of a public health nurse?

My job is ever-changing. I don't do direct care; instead, I supervise programs that work to prevent chronic diseases in the community. Chronic disease is long-term, associated with many risk factors, and in most cases, cannot be cured. Heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes are some of the most common chronic diseases we address in public health.

What are your top three responsibilities that you would highlight?

I work to make the community a healthier place to live, learn, work and play. I do this in partnership with a wide verity of community organizations and members. For example, I recently worked on putting together a resource for teachers and staff in early learning centers to promote healthy eating and physical activity in the classroom. I often find myself in places that people would not traditionally expect to see a nurse. For example, we are currently working with cities to promote health.

How could students get a nursing role like yours in the future?

It is beneficial to have a least a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree, especially from a program that has a strong community health rotation.

CHARLOTTE FOSTER

A hospital executive

How would you describe the demand for your nursing role?

The combination of my nursing degree, clinical experience, and my Master's degree in Health Administration prepared me for my role. The demand for nurse leaders in clinical operations role is sometimes challenging to fill. Sometimes you really have to enjoy both business operations and nursing to fulfill your passion.

How could students get a nursing role like yours in the future?

Healthcare is an ever-changing profession, so future nurse leaders should enjoy and partake in continuous learning. Along with a passion for providing superb care for patients, a role similar to mine would require skills in overseeing the quality, safety, and financial performance of a business, managing staff, and strategizing for growth and development of the organization's place in the market. Together, both roles offer an opportunity to make a difference in the healthcare industry.

DAVID REYES

A university nursing professor

What are your top three responsibilities that you would highlight?

- Teaching students and supporting them to succeed
- Engaging in scholarship activities that benefit the communities that I work with to improve their quality of life and inform my teaching and research.
- My professional service activities, which could be participating on a professional board or serving on a university committee.

How would you describe the demand for your nursing role?

There is a great demand for nurse educators, particularly in the face of retirement for the "baby boomer" generation, which compounds the current shortage of nursing faculty. Until we get enough educators, nursing schools will turn away qualified students who apply.

L. SAWYER ROBERTSON

A correctional health nurse

What are your top three responsibilities that you would highlight?

- Safety and security
- Providing safe quality health care
- Providing prompt emergency health care

JAN WENDT

A maternal and child health nurse with public health

How would you describe a "day in the life" of a public health nurse?

I work with lots of people in different programs that help kids. A day in my role never seems to look the same! For example, I go to people's homes and help pregnant women have healthy pregnancies and prepare to become great moms; then I help those same new moms (and sometimes new dads) become better parents. I occasionally teach teen parents at an alternative high school; and I visit day care centers and do health and safety checks.

