Nursing is the largest healthcare profession in our state as well as in the nation. Nurses are the most educated and most trusted healthcare provider. They help people be as healthy as possible. We talked to several nurses to understand their roles and responsibilities. Hear what they had to say.

CATE ARMSTRONG
A registered nurse in a health clinic
What are your top three responsibilities that you would highlight?
• Patient care is always first! As the clinical staff lead, I try to impressed upon all of the staff how important it is to treat all the patients as if they were our 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 such a huge positive impact on patients and on for the organization I work for. How I can be a crucial piece in the health care team.

YOLANDA FOGS
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 variety 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 for children. I often find myself in places that people would not traditionally expect to see a nurse. For example, we are currently working with local businesses to promote healthy choices.

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 mental health nurse
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 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?
Getting an ever-changing profession, such as the ever-changing profession of mental health, should enjoy and partake in continuous learning. Along with a passion for providing care to 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
How would you describe the demand for your nursing role?
There is a great demand for nurse education, particularly in the face of retirement for the “baby boomer” generation, which compounds the shortage of nurse leaders. For example, in 2022, nurse leaders needed to guide health science 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.

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L. SAWYER ROBERTSON
A supervisor of Chronic Disease Prevention with public health
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 my practice. 
• 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?
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• Engaging in scholarship activities that benefit the communities that I work with to improve their quality of life and inform my teaching and my practice. 
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JAN WENDT
A supervisor of Chronic Disease Prevention with public health
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TO GREAT NON-HOSPITAL SETTINGS FOR NURSES

<table>
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<th>Setting</th>
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<td>Ambulatory care (for example, primary care clinic)</td>
<td>Providing primary care services</td>
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<td>Long-term care</td>
<td>Managing chronic conditions</td>
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<td>Community health</td>
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<td>School nursing</td>
<td>Earning the trust of students</td>
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<td>Nursing education in colleges and universities</td>
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<td>Nursing informatics</td>
<td>Education and support</td>
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Are any of these specialties calling your name? There is a high demand for clinical nurses and nurses who represent all ethnic groups and other underrepresented populations. Learning to be a nurse is a long road. 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. The BSN graduates, students who complete an Associate Degree in nursing at a community or technical college can take the NCLEX-RN, earning them a 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). 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 of Science in Nursing 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.

To register for NIE, visit us at seattletimes.com/nie or call 206.652.6290.

Read about more nurses working in exciting non-hospital roles www.wcnursing.org/nursing-practice/blog.