

#### WHAT IS PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING?

Public Health Nurses care and work with individuals, families and communities by reaching out and becoming involved in their lives. The American Public Health Association describes public health nursing as: "...the practice of promoting the health of populations using knowledge from nursing, social, and public health sciences." Public Health Nurses apply their skills to systems, communities and populations in addition to individual patients and families.

#### CORE PUBLIC HEALTH FUNCTIONS



- Assessment
- Assurance
- Policy Development

### Public Health Nurses provide essential public health functions

- Monitoring health status to identify community health problems
- Diagnosing and investigating health problems and health hazards in the community
- Informing, educating and empowering people about health issues
- Mobilizing community partnerships to identify and solve health problems
- Developing policies and plans that support Individuals and community health and ensure safety
- Enforcing laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
- Linking people to needed personal health services and assuring the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable
- Assuring a competent public health and personal health care workforce
- Evaluating effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services

1950s

health system.

Polio and Asian flu epidemics

affected citizens and public



Researching new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

Using new curricula and professional practices, the public health nursing workforce continues to evolve to meet these challenges.



#### Public Health Nursing - Past, **Present and Future**

For more than 100 years, public health nursing has evolved from direct care for ill and vulnerable populations to a much broader mission of promoting health and preventing disease. Public health nursing works to meet the complex health needs of today's global community. Change is not only inevitable, but it is also integral to a dynamic and interactive process.

#### The following trends are currently influencing public health nursing practices and are expected to continue to do so in the future:

- Continued emphasis on risk reduction, health promotion and disease prevention
- Enhanced multi-disciplinary efforts and community partnerships addresses complex public health issues
- Required new approaches for threats of global diseases, antibiotic resistant diseases, natural disasters and bioterrorism require new approaches
- Increased diversity in communities' demographic patterns affects public health nursing practices

- Increased accountability is essential to producing continued improvement in health outcomes and assuring continued program
- Increased shortage of educated nurses nationwide poses a significant challenge to have adequately prepared staff
- Increased educational and professional opportunities will be available due to expanding technology
- Expanded technology will pose challenges but will make it easier to share information with colleagues, consumers, and organizations around the world



Photos provided courtesy of Jefferson County Public Health Communications





TB Association funding to care



## 1947 Federal relief funds helped establish

traveling clinics from Denver to other parts of the state. Social Security Act Title V Maternal & Child Health (MCH), provided funding for well hild and maternity clinics. Crippled ildren Clinics established.



1970s Neighborhood health clinics established in Colorado



1990s

Services include targeting societal issues, vulnerable and minority populations, the mentally and physically disabled, victims of HIV/AIDS and domestic violence



#### 2008

- Colorado Public Health Act passed
  - Colorado county nurses become Public Health Directors in many communities



1870s



1893 illian Wald identified as first PHN in the nation



1910-1920

- Federal relief funds helped establish traveling clinics.
- Social Security Act (Title V) Maternal Child Health (MCH) provided funding for:
- well child clinics
- maternity clinics
- crippled children clinics



#### 1960s

- Organized health departments expanded services in Colorado
- Medicare established
- · Home health care initiated



## 1980s

Home care began to privatize



#### 2000s

omeland Security, emerging communicable diseases and drug resistant organisms place greater demands on public nealth professionals to manage new challenges while working to assure that local public health roles are fulfilled

## 2010

- Colorado State Board of Health establishes common auidelines under The Public Health Improvement Act
  - Timelines are developed. for new local community health assessments from which public health plans are developed

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE

8:00 am

Public health nurses engage in a diverse range of activities.

While their daily schedules vary widely, the following offers a snapshot of what a typical day might entail for a public health nurse.

#### 9:00 am Monitor Health Status

- Meet with Strategic Planning Committee to further develop short term goals, strategies and action plans to improve community health outcomes for today's topic of childhood obesity.
- Investigate and enforce state immunization regulation regarding an unsubstantiated report of Pertussis "Whooping Cough" in a local child care center. Steps include verifying illness, identification of source case and contacts, onset of illness, vulnerable populations including immunization histories, and planning for measures to stop the spread.

#### 10:30 am Inform and Educate

 Develop a public information plan regarding the case of Pertussis and work with news media representatives.

#### 11:30 am Develop Policy

 Meet with City Council to discuss proposed tobacco ordinance to reduce availability of tobacco products for youth.

#### 1:00 pm Evaluate Population-based Health Services

 Schedule a meeting with nine community partners to finalize the questions to be included in the public health community assessment.

#### 1:30 pm Assure Provisions of Public Health Services

 Work on a grant proposal to expand the Nurse Home Visitation Program to meet the needs of an additional 100 first time mothers.

#### 2:30 pm Link People to Public Health Services

 Meet with community partners to assist with establishing and identifying Medical Homes for Children with Special Health Care Needs.

#### 4:00 pm Mobilize Partnerships

~ Coordinate staff and volunteers for next day's influenza clinic.

#### 4:30 pm Assure a Competent Workforce

~ Prepare just-in-time training for staff and volunteers.

5:00 pm Drive home knowing that today I made a difference in my community.

#### RESOURCES

- **APHA PHN Section Position Statement (1996)**
- Quad Council Public Health Nursing Competencies(2009)
- ANA Public Health Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice(2007)
- PHN Directors of Washington, "Public Health Nursing Within Core Public Health Functions" (1993)
- ASTDN's "Public Health Nursing, A Partner for Healthy Populations" (2000)

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## BENEFITS OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

There are many exciting and rewarding opportunities in public health where the public health nurse works with communities and populations in addition to individual patients and families, to identify health needs, provide services and improve the overall health of their communities. Nurses entering the profession can expect to develop and use skills in the following:

- Independent and critical thinking skills
- Knowledge of nursing and scientific principles
- Expertise in forming partnerships and collaborative relationships
- Skills in reaching out to people and assisting them in making healthy lifestyle choices
- Knowledge in social and behavioral sciences, epidemiology, environmental health, leadership, and finance
- Knowledge regarding Emergency Preparedness
- Knowledge of current treatment modalities and health care delivery systems
- Ethical principles
- Knowledge of health policy, research, and treatment options

## Public Health Nurses can help promote growth and change by:

- Being agents of change
- Taking leadership roles within their communities
- Becoming mentors
- Sharing their knowledge, experience, and wisdom
- Using evidence based practice
- Staying abreast of changing technology and information
- Staying abreast of data and health information

Public health administrators and policy-makers must make certain that a trained, committed, and energetic pool of public health nursing professionals is available by advocating for and ensuring:

- An adequate education system to develop an increased number of nurses entering the profession
- Strategies to successfully attract and retain qualified public health nurses including adequate and competitive salaries and benefits
- Cultural and ethnic diversity

Public health nurses in more isolated and rural communities are often the public health director. There is a need for nurses to become leaders and advocates to ensure the development of quality services. Through effective collaboration, public health nurses will continue to support Colorado's communities and help individuals achieve maximum health. Public Health Nurses must be prepared for new challenges in an ever-changing world.