

**Position
Statement
Series**

LSU Health
NEW ORLEANS
School of Nursing



NURSING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY HEALTH NEW ORLEANS
SCHOOL OF NURSING YEAR OF THE NURSE AND MIDWIFE

LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing celebrates the Year of the Nurse and Midwife with this position statement series to provide the public with information on the nurse's role within the health care environment, create public awareness regarding nursing's contribution and impact in health care, and disseminate our nursing school's contribution to workforce development and health care.

Louisiana State University Health New Orleans School of Nursing Year of the
Nurse and Midwife

Position Statement Series: Nursing Professional Development

By:

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The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated 2020 as the “International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife,” in honor of the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s birth. This designation recognizes the valuable role of nurses in promoting health. The WHO projects that approximately nine million or more nurses and midwives will be needed to provide global health coverage over the next decade (WHO, 2020). The projection explicates the importance of nursing continuing professional development (NCPD). Nursing professional development (NPD) is defined as a “specialized nursing practice that facilitates the professional role development and growth of nurses and other healthcare personnel along the continuum from novice to expert” (Harper & Maloney, 2016, p.6).

The changing roles and functions of the nurse within a complex health care system mandates the need for continued education and professional development to promote current knowledge in clinical practice. Nurses engage in professional development to maintain competence, to advance professionally, and to ultimately provide optimal care to patients, families and communities. Nursing continuing professional development is required by regulatory and certifying agencies, such as state boards of nursing and national professional certifying organizations. Nurses can meet such requirements by participating in educational opportunities offered by employers, academic institutions, private entities, professional associations, and social media platforms. In addition, some requirements can be met through collaboration as members of interprofessional healthcare teams. A larger, more diverse nursing workforce will demand new ways of provision of care and health promotion elucidating the need to continue education due to evolving evidence based practice.

History of the Specialty

The history of the NPD specialty began with Florence Nightingale who said, “Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses.... we must be learning all our lives” which suggests the necessity for nurses to constantly learn and adapt to be crucial contributors in healthcare (Nightingale, 1914). Blanche Pfefferkom, a registered nurse who served as the Executive Secretary for the National League for Nursing Education’s 1928 Biennial Convention known today as the National League for Nursing (NLN), highlighted the importance of continued improvement of “the nurse in service” and the “graduate nurse for professional or cultural growth” (Pfefferkom, 1928, p. 703). Ms. Pfefferkom’s speech advocating for nurses to continue their education and development after graduation while they are serving patients was subsequently published in the American Journal of Nursing (Pfefferkorn, 1928). She was instrumental in developing the specialty of NPD and introducing the ideology of NPD practice as in-service and in-service education.

Notably, after World War II, there was an increased demand for nurses resulting in an influx of nurses working in the community into the hospital setting creating a necessity for in-service education to orient transitioning nurses (Miller, 1956). As in-service education became a function of nursing services within hospitals, the American Nurses Association (ANA) started to develop “functions” which were the predecessors to the current scope and standards and, for the first time included education in 1954 (ANA, 1954).

The 1960s experienced a proliferation of technology and knowledge that required the formalization of education departments supporting the education of nurses at the bedside to increase proficiency and competency in caring for patients within evolving healthcare systems and

delivery models. During 1970, the term in-service education was included under the term continuing education. In the early 1970s, the ANA published transformational statements on continuing nursing education and formed the first Council on Continuing Education (ANA, 1973). The first standards for continuing education were published by the ANA in 1975. In 1976, the ANA published guidelines for staff development and the term *in-service education* was formally replaced with *nursing staff development*. Although the specialty now had a formal name, it did not keep pace with other specialties in establishing a professional organization. The National Nursing Staff Development Organization (NNSDO) was established in 1989 with the purpose of convening NPD practitioners to advance the specialty practice of staff development for the enhancement of healthcare outcomes. The NNSDO subsequently renamed and rebranded the organization to the Association for Nursing Professional Development (ANPD) in 2012 to align with the *2010 Nursing Professional Development: Scope and Standards of Practice* published jointly by the ANA and NNSDO in 2010. The 3rd edition of the NPD scope and standards was published in 2016. Continuing education continues to be a core component of nursing professional development. The specialty and the organization continue to grow and evolve.

Role Scope of Practice

The designation of nursing professional development practitioner was created as an all-encompassing term that describes a registered nurse (RN) who influences professional role competence and professional growth of learners in a variety of settings. Nursing professional development practitioners may function at two levels: generalist and specialist. A generalist is an NPD practitioner with a baccalaureate degree with or without NPD certification or a graduate degree without NPD certification. A specialist is someone with a graduate degree and certification

in NPD. If the graduate degree is not in nursing, the baccalaureate must be in nursing (Harper & Maloney, 2016).

Nursing professional development practice can be delineated into seven professional roles: learning facilitator, leader, partner for practice transitions, change agent, champion for scientific inquiry, mentor, and advocate for the NPD specialty. Nursing professional development practitioners know and adhere to the NPD standards of practice which are used in a variety of ways to enhance NPD practice and advancement of the specialty (Harper & Maloney, 2016).

The Role's Impact in Healthcare

Nursing professional development is the cornerstone of improving competencies and ensuring high-quality patient care by nurses which ultimately contributes to better health outcomes for patients. Nursing Professional Development practitioners support nurses in evidence-based practice and quality improvement through professional development. NPD practitioners help nurses engage in lifelong learning to develop and maintain their competencies, advance professional nursing practice, and facilitate achievement of academic and practice career goals. Nursing professional development practitioners work in a variety of practice settings and care environments.

NPD specialists facilitate evidence-based practice by conveying nursing research to the point of care. They translate, integrate, and evaluate research through practice, education, and dialogue with staff (Association for Nursing Professional Development [ANPD], 2017).

Louisiana State University Health New Orleans School of Nursing's Provision of NPD

Nursing Continuing Professional Development is an integral part of the mission of the LSUHNO School of Nursing (SON) and is aligned with the organizational strategic priorities. The philosophy of the SON supports the concept of continued learning through a commitment to

provide instruction and service for Louisiana nurses. The changing roles and functions of the nurse within a diverse healthcare system mandates the need for continued education and professional development to maintain competency in practice to produce the most optimal patient care and outcomes.

The LSUHNO SON Continuing Education Program began in January 1975 with the appointment of a Regional Coordinator for Continuing Education. This position was made available through a contractual agreement with the Louisiana State Nurses Association, and funded from a United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Special Project Grant. In 1978, funding from the Grant terminated and the program continued on State funds until 1986 when the program became self-supporting through self-generated income. The Continuing Education Program was first accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) as a provider of continuing nursing education in July 1980 and has continued to maintain accreditation since that time. The ANCC is the world's largest and most prestigious nurse credentialing organization.

Conclusion

Nursing Professional Development practitioners are valuable to organizations, fellow nurses, patient populations and their communities. As 2020 is being recognized as the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, the NPD practitioner's role in meeting NPD needs worldwide should be recognized. Nurses everywhere are challenged to lead, innovate and excel. NPD practitioners and the continuing education they provide has evolved to do just that. Advances in learning theory, educational methods, and technologies encourage nurses to use professional development as a tool to advance professional practice to meet personal and professional goals and to ensure positive patient care outcomes.

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