

# CHAPTER 1

## Nursing Program Overview

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The California Department of Corrections employs Registered Nurses (RN), Supervising Registered Nurses (SRN), Medical Technical Assistants (MTA), Senior Medical Technical Assistants (SrMTA), Licensed Psychiatric Technicians (LPT) and Hospital Aides (HA).

Each institution shall take reasonable steps to maintain the full complement of authorized health care staff.

Institutions shall have on site a minimum of one RN 24 hours per day. When a physician is not on-site, the highest priority duty for RNs shall be emergency care. MTAs respond to emergencies and deliver patient care within their scope of practice. MTAs receive administrative supervision from SrMTAs but receive clinical direction from RNs or Physicians. The SRNs are charged with the overall supervision of the delivery of nursing services throughout the institution.

### NURSING SERVICES LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

Each institution shall establish a method for verifying the current licensure for each RN, Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), LPT and MTA. Only those with a current license shall be assigned patient care duties. Nurses working expanded roles, i. e., nurse practitioners and nurse anesthetists, shall also maintain current, appropriate certification. The SRN shall be responsible for maintaining documentation on any nursing staff with restrictions on their license. The SRN shall inform the Health Care Manager (HCM) of any licensure restrictions. The HCM shall inform the Centralized Credentialing Unit of the Health Care Services Division (HCSD) in Sacramento of the reported restrictions.

### NURSING SERVICES ORGANIZATION

All provisions of nursing care shall be under the supervision of a RN. A sufficient number of RNs, MTAs, LPTs, and HAs shall be on duty at all times to provide nursing care according to patient needs, as well as meet licensure requirements.

### NURSING SERVICES PROCEDURES

Each institution shall maintain local written policies and procedures, in conformance with the HCSD Policies and Procedures, for the safe and effective delivery of quality nursing care. Nursing policies and procedures shall be developed in coordination with all departments and established for every patient service area. The institutional local governing body (at institutions that have a licensed health care program) shall approve policies. Where there is no local governing body, the HCM, with the Chief Medical Officer, Chief Psychiatrist or other physician designee (if the HCM is not a licensed physician) shall approve policies. Each nursing service employee shall be trained in the policies and procedures during orientation, and whenever new policies and procedures are established. RNs may utilize standardized procedures after

completion of required training and competency testing. The SRN or designee shall maintain all training and competency records in a Proof of Practice binder. Nursing policies and procedures shall be reviewed annually and revised as required to reflect current standards of nursing practice.

All nursing staff shall be trained on health screening and their competency verified prior to being assigned to work in the Receiving & Release area. The Supervising RN or designee shall maintain all training and competency records in the Proof of Practice binder.

The SRN shall review approximately five records per week or twenty records per month on each RN working in a clinic or emergency treatment area using the protocols. The SRN shall summarize the findings including aspects that were well done as well as areas needing improvement, and discuss the findings with the RN on a monthly basis. A summary of the reviews shall be submitted on a monthly basis to Continuous Quality Management for training purposes.

#### **NURSING SCOPE OF PRACTICE**

Each RN shall perform his/her duties according to the scope of practice as stated in the Business and Professions Code (B&PC), Section 2725, "Practice of Nursing Defined." RNs may perform beyond the normal scope of practice only by utilizing standardized procedures as defined in B&PC section 2725(d)(2). Standardized procedures shall be provided by HCSD. Each standardized procedure shall be developed according to the California Board of Registered Nurses, "Standardized Procedure Guidelines." Prior to performing standardized procedures each RN shall complete the required training and competency testing.

Each MTA shall perform his/her duties according to the "Scope of Regulation," B&PC, Article 2, Section 2959. MTAs may perform patient care activities only under the direction of a physician or a RN. See Chapter 4 in this Volume, "Licensed Vocational Nurse Scope of Practice Standards."