

The History of Public Health and the Role of the Community/Public Health Nurse

Public health nursing has notably been through evolution that is characterized by developments and figures that are key. Through her leadership and vision, Lillian Wald is portrayed as a pivotal figure in the transformation of this field according to the American Nurses Association. (2022).

Lillian Wald and the Henry Street Settlement

In the late 19th century, Henry Street Settlement was established in New York by Lillian Wald, who is known to be the founder of public health nursing in the United States (Iheduru-Anderson, 2020). This facility was key in the provision of social services and healthcare delivery to impoverished immigrants, not only solving their medical needs but also addressing the social factors that have impacts on their health. Her approach went beyond clinical care showing a focus on education, preventive measures, and social advocacy. According to the American Nurses Association, (2022), Ward's effort led to enhanced health outcomes in marginalized settlements and influenced the policies of public health, setting a standard for community-focused care. The Henry Street Settlement was later made a national model, to demonstrate the urge of having a comprehensive approach to health that incorporates advocacy, education, and social support.

Role of the Nurse in School Health Settings

Public health officers have a critical duty to ensure better health conditions for the students in school. This goes beyond just addressing the immediate needs of medical attention but also involves a focus on early interventions, disease prevention, and health education (McCabe et al 2022). The ideally positioned school nurses identify health-related issues, manage chronic conditions, and ensure an environment that is conducive to learning and academic success.

Core Functions and Standards of Practice

School nurses carry out the essential roles of public health that include assurance, policy development, and assessment (Albert, et al, 2020). Assurance guarantees access to basic health services and proper implementation of the health service programs to the students. Policy development involves creating individualized health plans for students with conditions such as diabetes or asthma. Assessment includes conducting health screenings and identification of the needs of the students.

The standards of practice highlight health education, clinical expertise, and advocacy. School nurses work with educators, families, and community resources to provide support to the mental and physical health of the students. They must remain up-to-date with best practices and adjust to changing health challenges within schools.

Population Served

School nurses primarily attend to kids and adolescents from various socioeconomic homes, each with unique health challenges. They tackle the needs of students including those with chronic illnesses, disabilities, and mental health concerns, making sure equitable care and educational support are realized.

Key Interventions

In school, nursing interventions cover both personal care and the broader initiatives of public health. Direct care includes services such as the management of chronic diseases, administration of medications, and provision of first aid while health promotion activities involve services such as education on hygiene, nutrition, and mental health. The school nurses are also charged with the duty of campaigns on vaccinations and preventive programs to reduce communicable diseases (Neil-Sztramko et al, 2021).

Levels of Practice

School nursing functions basically at the primary and secondary prevention levels. Primary prevention is focused on the promotion of health and prevention of disease by immunization education. Secondary prevention includes early identification of health issues, such as vision screenings or managing acute conditions. In certain instances, tertiary prevention is applied, where nurses help manage chronic conditions to prevent complications.

Ethical Dilemmas

Confidentiality and autonomy are among the ethical dilemmas that are common in school nursing. For example, in a situation where a nurse receives sensitive information about mental health and substance use from a student, it becomes challenging to balance the rights of the student to confidentiality with the duty to protect their well-being (Neil-Sztramko et al, 2021). In addition, without parental consent or in scenarios of belief clashes with medical recommendations, conflicts may arise. Iheduru-Anderson, K. (2020) suggests that navigating these dilemmas requires clear communication, adherence to ethical principles, and a focus on the best interests of the students.

References

- Albert, J. S., Younas, A., & Sana, S. (2020). Nursing students' ethical dilemmas regarding patient care: An integrative review. *Nurse Education Today*, 88, 104389.
- American Nurses Association. (2022). Code of ethics for nurses with interpretive statements. 2015.
- Iheduru-Anderson, K. (2020, November). Barriers to career advancement in the nursing profession: Perceptions of Black nurses in the United States. In *Nursing Forum* (Vol. 55, No. 4, pp. 664-677).
- McCabe, E. M., Davis, C., Mandy, L., & Wong, C. (2022). The role of school connectedness in supporting the health and well-being of youth: Recommendations for school nurses. *NASN school nurse*, 37(1), 42-47.
- Neil-Sztramko, S. E., Caldwell, H., & Dobbins, M. (2021). School-based physical activity programs for promoting physical activity and fitness in children and adolescents aged 6 to 18. *Cochrane database of systematic reviews*, (9).