

INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course is designed for registered nurses working in public health departments. It requires the completion of two prerequisites prior to course admission. Both can be completed online and each awards a certificate upon completion. These prerequisites are “Introduction to Public Health in North Carolina” which can be accessed at <http://www.sph.unc.edu/oce/> and “E is for Epi” (a five part training series) which can be accessed at <http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/index.htm>. Both of the prerequisites are free of charge.

Participants **must bring** documentation of completion of these prerequisites when they check in for the land-based part of the course. *Without documentation, they will not be allowed to participate in the class.*

The Introduction to Public Health Nursing course itself is presented in a workshop setting. Participants attend a 2½ day land-based training session in a central location. *Participants will be required to show documentation of completion of the two prerequisites before they are admitted to the course.*

Emphasis in the course is placed on a synthesis of nursing practice and public health. Nursing Services directed to individuals, families and groups is presented in the context of improving the health of the entire community. *Successful completion of this course is a **legal requirement** for Public Health Nurses who do not have a BSN during their first year of employment with a local health department.*

COURSE GOALS:

- To assure minimum competencies in the practice of public health and public health nursing.
- To increase the competencies of beginning public health nurses.
- To comply with the administrative rule requiring minimum education in public health nursing to practice as a public health nurse in North Carolina.
- To comply with prerequisites to enhanced roles for public health nurses.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

At the completion of this course, local public health nurses will be able to:

- Discuss the role of public health and its core functions;
- Identify essential data to assess health care needs of populations;
- Discuss the forces shaping the current health care system;
- Apply principles of public health practice to care provided in local health departments in North Carolina;

- Describe the community or population as a client;
- Use case studies to determine the effectiveness of health services provided;
- Discuss the application of the nursing process to public health nursing care for individuals, families and populations;
- Identify trends and issues influencing public health and public health nursing practice in North Carolina;
- Describe skills needed to manage care of clients in the community;
- Discuss the role of public health and public health nurses in disasters.

COURSE PLACEMENT AND PARTICIPANTS:

This course is designed for Registered Nurses hired to positions in local health departments during their first year of employment and it is a legal requirement for those working in this setting who do not have a BSN. Ideal timing is after the first six weeks of employment, but within the first year of practice.

Other public health Registered Nurses who have not had course preparation in public health or have limited educational preparation in public health and those public health nurses who have completed their BSN but feel they need additional public health preparation may also take the course.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

You can find the recommended readings for each module on both the Intro webpage and in the syllabus. We have identified the readings from both Edition Seven and Edition Eight of Stanhope, Marcia and Lancaster, Jeanette; *Public Health Nursing: Population-Centered Health Care in the Community*. The Public Health Nursing and Professional Development Unit provided a copy of the Seventh Edition text to each health department when that edition was first published. If that copy is not available or if you who like to purchase a personal copy of either edition you can do so at most larger bookstores or by contacting the UNC CH Health Affairs Bookstore: phone 919-966-2208.

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION:

A written final exam will be mailed to the participant's supervisor during the week of the land-based course. The exam must be proctored by a *supervisor* or other superior in the health department (someone above the student on the health department's O-Chart). That proctor must complete a "Verification of Proctored Exam Process" form. This form will be sent to the supervisor. The form intends to validate that the exam was administered to the student(s) in a proctored setting and that, to the best of the proctor's knowledge, no notes, books or other materials were used by the student(s) during the exam period. Students will have a maximum of two full hours to complete the exam.

All written exams are due as indicated on the agenda in this syllabus. If the exam is not *postmarked* by the deadline date, **5 points per business day will be taken from the final grade.**

Written exams will be sent to the university testing center as soon as all exams have been received. Students will be notified of their course grade as soon as possible after scored exams are received from the testing center. It generally takes four to six weeks after the test deadline date for the grades to be returned to the student.

A certificate of completion will be mailed to those who successfully complete the final exam. A memo bearing the grade will be sent to the student's supervisor and it should be placed in the employee's permanent file. The student should also place their original certificate of completion in a safe place in the event it should be needed in the future to validate completion of this course.

An email will be sent to those who do not successfully complete their exam indicating their options to pursue a successful exam grade as indicated below.

For RNs who do not have a BSN:

1. Successful completion is based on a passing grade (80% or better) on the written exam.
2. If the student has a failing grade (less than 80%) on the written examination, the student has the following option(s):
 - Take a make-up examination and obtain a passing grade. Note: The student is strongly encouraged to meet with the course coordinator to review performance on the previous course examination prior to taking the make-up examination.
 - If the student does *not achieve* 80% or better on the *make-up* exam, the student has the option to:
 - Retake this course and pass the written examination, or
 - Take a course in public health nursing theory in a BSN program, and obtain a passing grade on a written examination for that course.

The above is accomplished with special permission of the Public Health Nursing and Professional Development Unit and with the consultation of the supervisor/director of nursing at the local agency.

RNs who have a BSN are not required to complete the final exam unless stipulated by their health department.

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance at each class session is expected of all participants. In the event of unavoidable absence, students will need to notify the course coordinator and work with a fellow student in the course to catch up on class notes.

GUIDE TO MODULES:

The syllabus is a working tool. Each module is a written guide to help you in studying this material. The guide contains the following features:

- *Overview:* what the overall concept or main thrust of the module is, generally what you'll be doing in the module, and why the material is important.
- *Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills:* information studied in previous courses that you will be applying in this course to the public health setting.
- *Objectives:* guidelines to focus your reading and study.
- *Key Terms:* new definitions or concepts introduced in the reading or class.
- *Reading Assignment:* text and other required readings.
- *Supplemental Reading:* additional sources for further optional study in specialized areas.

In addition, some modules have guidelines, tools, instruments, study questions, or other attachments to help you learn.

It is recommended that students read the syllabus and all recommended readings prior to the Intro course begin date.

WEATHER POLICY:

If participant suspects weather cancellation, call Hazel at (252) 364-1348 or (252) 341-6504 (cell). A recorded announcement will inform you if class is being held.