

## **The Role of the Registered Nurse in Nephrology**

According to the *Nephrology Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice*, “nephrology nursing is a specialty practice addressing the protection, promotion, and optimization of the health abilities, prevention of illness and injury, facilitation of healing, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations affected by kidney disease” (Gomez, 2017, p. 1).

Nephrology registered nurses work in a variety of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary environments. The majority of nephrology registered nursing practice focuses on the patient population with identified kidney disease. Nephrology registered nurses also practice within the community in the prevention and identification of kidney disease. Patient care is provided through a team approach involving nephrology registered nurses, certified clinical hemodialysis technicians, biomedical technicians, social workers, licensed practical/vocational nurses, renal dietitians, pharmacists, advanced practice registered nurses, physician assistants, nephrologists, surgeons, interventional radiologists, and medical directors. The nephrology registered nurse provides clinical supervision of the licensed practical/vocational nurse, and certified clinical hemodialysis technicians in accordance with state practice acts, state licensing rules, and the applicable Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations.

Wherever they practice, nephrology registered nurses use critical thinking skills to respond to the needs of patients with kidney disease. Nephrology registered nurses are mindful of resource utilization while implementing strategies and interventions to promote optimal outcomes, most appropriate to the healthcare consumer and situation.

### **It is the position of ANNA that:**

The nephrology registered nurse:

- Coordinates patient centered care in collaboration with other healthcare providers and team members to plan and provide required care as effectively as possible.
- Acts as a patient guide and advocate, assisting the patient in seeking information, assuring that the patient has the opportunity for informed consent for treatment decisions, and promoting the maximal level of patient-desired independence.
- Is accountable for delivering care within the framework of the nursing process.
- Evaluates assessment findings to formulate nursing diagnoses and prioritize problems according to patient need.
- Engages the patient in mutual goal setting and collaboration in developing a plan of care directed toward achieving identified goals. The effectiveness of the plan of care in goal achievement is evaluated through patient outcomes.
- Actively participates in professional role development activities including continuing education, quality assessment and performance improvement, and the review and clinical application of research findings to assure evidence-based practice.
- Ensures an ethically sound practice and confronts ethical challenges through application of the *Nephrology Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice*.
- Provides the leadership necessary for collaboration and coordination of care, assuring patient safety and the delivery of appropriate care.

Certification of the registered nurse in nephrology is a method to recognize competence by the profession. The model of the certification examination for the specialty of nephrology nursing is based on the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition, as adapted by Patricia Benner, to affirm competency in nephrology nursing clinical practice.

## Reference

Gomez, N. (2017). *Nephrology nursing scope and standards of practice* (8th ed.). Pitman, NJ: American Nephrology Nurses Association.

## Suggested Readings

American Nurses Association. (2008). Professional role competence: ANA position statement. Silver Spring, MD: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/Policy-Advocacy/Positions-and-Resolutions/ANAPositionStatements/Position-Statements-Alphabetically/Professional-Role-Competence.html>

Fowler, M.D.M. (2008). *Guide to the code of ethics for nurses: Interpretation and application*. Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Association.

Institute of Medicine. (2011). *The future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health*. Retrieved from [www.thefutureofnursing.org/IOM-Report](http://www.thefutureofnursing.org/IOM-Report)

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