

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSISTANT

This class identifies basic paraprofessional work in home health, clinics, or community outreach programs in local health departments. Assignments are primarily in the areas of personal care and educational outreach under professional supervision, yet some incidental transportation services may be performed. Work may involve assisting in setting up clinics, aiding physicians with examinations, ordering supplies, and other similar paraprofessional assignments.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Complexity - Work is limited in complexity, but does include a variety of basic home health care and simple mechanical nursing assignments such as: checking vital signs, demonstrating personal hygiene, checking to see that prescribed medications are being taken according to instructions from the physician, and observation of the client for any change in condition to report to the nurse. Outreach work involves canvassing low-income neighborhoods to provide families with basic information on available health services or clinic hours, and to encourage proper health care. Assignments in clinics include: assisting with setting up of equipment, managing client flow, explaining clinic procedures to patients, positioning clients, checking vital signs, doing limited lab tests, and assuring that the client understands the professionals' diagnosis and medication instructions by reinforcing them.

Guidelines - Duties are performed within limits of local policies. Written daily referrals are given employees. Instructions are clear and normally given by nurse. Employee would check with professional before varying the service prescribed.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Consequence of Action - Clients are often unaware of available medical care or are unmotivated, and may reside in unsanitary conditions. Services provided assist client or family in improving home health needs and/or home environment. Clinic assignments assist professionals in providing quality health care.

Accountability - Home health care and outreach work reflect on the quality of the organization since this is an extension of total program. In outreach, an employee may be the prime means of creating understanding and utilization of agency services by tact exercised and information provided. Other community resources may also be explained and referrals made. While in the home, the employee may be the ongoing contact or instructor on personal care with members.

Reviews - Daily reports are completed for nurses' review outlining specific health care and/or services provided, neighborhoods visited and problems encountered. Clinic work is more closely reviewed than home health care due to the ongoing presence of other professional staff. A supervisor or nurse usually accompanies employee on the initial home visit while subsequent visits are conducted by employee with occasional on-site supervision by the nurse and/or other professionals.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Subject Matter - Work is with clients who often have decreased comprehension which requires constant repetition on understanding the professional medical instructions and carrying out personal hygiene. Clients are often unmotivated or may be unaware of available community resources or need assistance in understanding basic health care procedures.

Purpose - Work varies from sharing information, explaining medical instructions, demonstrating health care procedures and clarifying clients' problem to physician, to reporting observations of conditions to the professionals. Constant encouragement is offered to motivate clients.

IV. WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Nature of Working Conditions - Outreach and home care assignments entail contact in homes of families and bedridden clients where unsanitary conditions may exist. Office work is performed in clinic setting.

Personal Hazards - Sanitary procedures must be strictly observed in homes and clinics for both clients' and employees' safety. Clients may be verbally abusive at times due to illness and senility, and on occasion may attempt physical harm.

V. JOB REQUIREMENTS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - Working knowledge of applicable supportive mechanical acts and/or sanitation and personal hygiene; basic knowledge of the social, economic, and environmental conditions of clients to be served; ability to establish rapport and relate to population served and a variety of services disciplines (nurses, doctors, social workers); ability to follow written and verbal instructions; ability to record basic data; ability to perform required physical tasks; ability to learn basic lab techniques such as urinalysis, hemoglobin, hematocrit.

Minimum Training and Training - Demonstrated possession of knowledges, skills, and abilities as stated above through at least one year of experience in performing similar tasks in a hospital, clinic, nursing home, medical corps, or other medical treatment program.

Special Condition for Continued Employment - If applicable, registration as a Nurse Aide by the North Carolina Board of Nursing within four months of employment.