

Bridging Public Health Nursing Practice & Education: Creating Support for Nursing Students

Barbara Dingfelder, MPH, BSN, RN, PHCNS-BC, CHES; Linda Strong, EdD, RN; Margaret Balint, BSN, RN-BC
Connecticut Association of Public Health Nurses

Literature Review

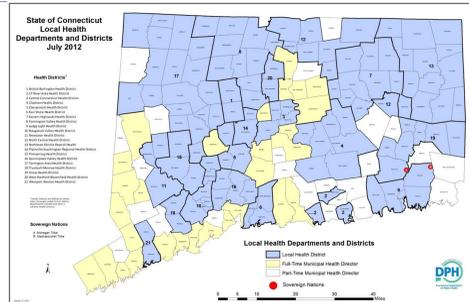
•“Nurses need to attain requisite competencies include leadership, health policy, system improvement, teamwork and collaboration including public health”

“Recommendation 7: Nursing associations should provide leadership development, mentoring program, and opportunities to lead for their members”

(IOM, 2010, Future of Nursing)

Presentation Objectives

- Describe education-practice collaborations that support development of evidenced based population nursing



- Decentralized public health system with two tiers, state and local
- 53 municipal health departments and 21 health districts
- 3.5 million total est. population residing within approx. 4800 sq. miles

Connecticut's Local Health Infrastructure

•Local health departments (LHDs) operate independently from each other

Municipal health departments

- Governed by municipal legislative body (i.e., Board of Selectpersons or Town Council)
- Population >40,000 for 5 consecutive years are required to be served by a full-time director of health (CT General Statute §19a-200)
- Currently there are 25 Part-time and 29 Full-time

2+ municipalities can join voluntarily to form a health district (§19 a-241)

- Full-time local health agency provides services for communities within the combined jurisdiction
- Governed by a board of directors, which includes representatives from each member of respective municipalities

Connecticut Association of Public Health Nurses (CAPHN)

•Organization was formed in 2003 by local health department nurses to develop a network.

VISION: Advance the role and identity of public health nursing through advocacy for all registered nurses in Connecticut who prevent illness and injury, promote and protect the health of communities through active leadership.

Challenges

- Variability of the provision of LHD service – “providing the service, contracting with another health department or community agency or coordinating public health services with other community or regional resources providing specialized services” CT Public Health Code s §19a-76-2
- Autonomous relationship of LHDs
- Differences in LHDs include infrastructure, access to community health resources, populations served, governance, and jurisdictions
- Provisions for nursing services vary in scope and role(s)
- Multi-disciplinary LHD staff vary from small (<10 FTE) to large >400 FTE) and may include nursing staff employed or contracted by agency

Nursing Positions with LHDs

Public Health Nurse
Director of Nurses
Management

- Director of Health (requires MPH)
- Program Director

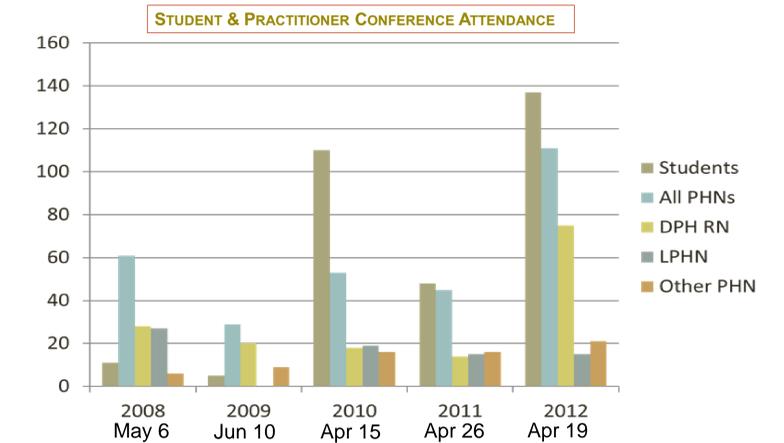
Nurse Supervisor
Nurse Practitioners
School Nurse
Other RNs

Roles of Nurses Working in LHDs

Administrators
Case investigators & managers
Clinical care providers
Consultants
Develop policies & program plans
Emergency preparedness coordinators (e.g. local evacuation/sheltering efforts, mass vaccination clinics, risk communication)

Epidemiologists
Health educators (public & professional)
Infection Control & Immunization
Program Coordinators
Quality assurance
School Health Nurse &/or Supervisor
Volunteer Coordinators (e.g., MRC, Training, Credentialing)

Co-Sponsored PHN Conferences



Evaluation

- Strength of collective actions (e.g., professional organizations, academic partners, and governmental public health agencies)
 - Increased participation of practitioners & RN students
 - Resources identified to minimize cost for attendance
 - Increased capacity to disseminate information through established on-line networks to minimize marketing costs
- Systematically analyzing conference participation and evaluation to determine if goals achieved, and if not why
- Centrally located venue needs sufficient exhibition space

Lessons Learned

- Need for advanced planning to coordinate with academic schedule for student participation
- Value of established relationships
 - CAPHN, DPH, CT Nurses Association, CT Partnership for Public Health Workforce Development, CT-RI Public Health Training Center, Schools of Nursing, CT League of Nurses, and CT Association of Public Health,
 - Linkages with national organizations for guest speakers (e.g., Association of Public Health Nurses, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)
- Importance of engaging target audiences and being sensitive to multiple generations with varied public health nursing experience
- Communication and collaboration essential to successful outcomes

Recommendations

- Establish of a yearly calendar
- Publish a standardized poster template, abstract format and evaluation criteria for participation
- Incentive interactions
- Identify sponsors