



# Ten Ways Public Health Nurses (PHNs) Improve Health

Optimal health is largely the result of a person's social and physical environments. As the largest segment of the health care workforce and the most trusted profession, nurses are leading the way to transform health and health care by focusing on the social determinants of health and the places where people live, learn, work, worship and play.

PHNs advance the health of individuals, families and communities using a distinct skill set. This skill set includes consistent utilization of the nursing process; application of critical thinking skills; and decision-making informed by science and evidence. These unique skills overlay all of the "Ten Ways" that PHNs improve health as described below.

1

## Prevent

PHNs work inside and outside clinic walls to prevent conditions such as obesity, diabetes, injuries, school absenteeism, infant mortality, and spread of communicable diseases.

2

## Educate

PHNs educate individuals, families, communities and stakeholders about healthy behaviors, environments, and policies that make the healthy choice the easy choice.

3

## Coordinate

PHNs coordinate and integrate care and services across the lifespan to improve individual and population health outcomes, improve health equity and reduce costs.

4

## Protect

PHNs protect people by educating about environmental hazards, preparing for emergencies and mobilizing during disasters.

5

## Lead

PHNs lead evidence-based quality practice and policy changes. They lead cross-sector and transdisciplinary collaborations that impact communities.

6

## Promote

PHNs promote health equity and health as a shared value through individual and community engagement and inclusion.

7

## Advocate

PHNs advocate for community assets that lead to healthier people such as safe and affordable housing, healthy school meals, tobacco prevention policies, safe places to walk and bike, access to healthy food, appropriate behavioral health treatment services, violence prevention and trauma informed care.

8

## Care

PHNs care for people, families, and communities. They understand the importance of culture, language, literacy, and how these shape health, well-being and equity.

9

## Integrate

PHNs recognize that health is a function of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. They assist individuals and communities in integrating a variety of needed services through collaborating, mobilizing and leading interdisciplinary teams, partners and consumers.

10

## Research

PHNs use research to inform their practice and do research to improve health of the individual, family and community.

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## **PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES**

### Leading population health, well-being, and equity for over a century

Public Health Nurses (PHNs) improve health through social justice, ethics, and quality care to individuals, communities, and populations in the United States. PHNs work within and for communities, reaching out to disadvantaged and underserved groups across cultural and language groups. The skill set of PHNs in the 21st century is ideal for advancing a Culture of Health through assessment, communication, collaboration, and knowledge of the health care system and forces driving change. PHNs have a holistic understanding of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being, and the social and environmental conditions that limit access to health, education, and opportunity. For over a century, PHNs have used these skills to lead changes that improve health.

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