**NOTE:** In addition to this Public Health Nursing Guide, it is important to refer to MAPHN’s **Leadership Guide and Resource Manual** for additional guidance. This document is currently being updated by MAPHN, which is embedded here:



The Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations (CPHNO – formerly the Quad Council Coalition of Public Health Nursing Organizations) represents public health nursing’s national structural component. It provides voice and visibility for public health nurses, sets a national policy agenda on issues related to public health nursing, and advocates for excellence in public health nursing education, practice, leadership, and research.

This group is comprised of:

* Association of Public Health Nurses (APHN).
* American Public Health Association (APHA), Public Health Nursing Section
* American Nurses Association (ANA), Congress on Nursing Practice and Economics
* Association of Community Health Nursing Educators (ACHNE)
* National Association of School Nurses (NASN)
* Rural Nurse Organization (RNO)
* Alliance of Nurses for Health Environments (ANHE)

Each has contributed to the establishment of tenets, processes, and standards of care and performance for public health nursing practice at the individual/family, population and community-wide levels.

There are many valuable resources to explore on their website: <https://www.cphno.org>

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| PHN Scope & Practice Standards Resources | * + [Public Health Nursing: Scope & Standards of Practice – American Nurses Association](https://www.nursingworld.org/nurses-books/public-health-nursing--scope--standards-of-practice-2nd-edition/)   + [Competencies for Public Health Nurses – CPHNO.org](https://www.cphno.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/QCC-C-PHN-COMPETENCIES-Approved_2018.05.04_Final-002.pdf)   + [Definition & Practice of Public Health Nursing / apha.org](https://www.apha.org/~/media/files/pdf/membergroups/phn/nursingdefinition.ashx)   + [Association of Public Health Nurses APHN / phnurse.org](https://www.phnurse.org/)   + [Local Public Health Institute of Massachusetts (bu.edu)](https://sites.bu.edu/masslocalinstitute/newtopublichealth/) |

Public health nursing distinguishes itself from other nursing specialties by adhering to the following principles:

1. The client or unit of care is the population.
2. The primary obligation is to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of people or the population as a whole.
3. The processes used by public health nurses include working with the client as an equal partner.
4. Primary prevention is the priority in selecting appropriate activities.
5. Public health nursing focuses on strategies that create healthy environmental, social, and economic conditions in which populations may thrive.
6. A public health nurse is obligated to actively identify and reach out to all who might benefit from a specific activity or service.
7. Optimal use of available resources to assure the best overall improvement in the health of the population is a key element of the practice.
8. Collaboration with a variety of other professions, populations, organizations, and other stakeholder groups is the most effective way to promote and protect the health of the people

The American Nurses Association (ANA) has published *Public Health Nursing: Scope & Standards of Practice*. This document provides the foundation and structure for the public health nursing specialty practice.

**STANDARDS of SCOPE & PRACTICE**

**Standard 1: Assessment**

The public health nurse collects comprehensive data pertinent to the health status of populations.

**Standard 2: Population Diagnosis and Priorities**

The public health nurse analyses the assessment data to determine the population diagnoses and priorities.

**Standard 3: Outcomes Identification**

The public health nurse identifies expected outcomes for a plan that is based on population diagnoses and priorities.

**Standard 4: Planning**

The public health nurse develops a plan that reflects best practices by identifying strategies, action plans, and alternatives to attain expected outcomes.

**Standard 5: Implementation**

The public health nurse implements the identified plan by partnering with others.

* **Standard 5A: Coordination**

The public health nurse coordinates programs, services, and other activities to implement the identified plan.

* **Standard 5B: Health Education and Health Promotion**

The public health nurse employs multiple strategies to promote health, prevent disease, and assure a safe environment for populations.

* **Standard 5C: Consultation**

The public health nurse provides consultation to various community groups and officials to facilitate the implementation of programs and services.

* **Standard 5D: Regulatory Activities**

The public health nurse identifies, interprets, and implements public health laws, regulations, and policies.

**Standard 6: Evaluation**

The public health nurse evaluates the health status of the population.

**Standard 7: Quality of Practice**

The public health nurse systematically enhances the quality and effectiveness of nursing practice.

**Standard 8: Education**

The public health nurse attains knowledge and competency that reflects current nursing and public health practice.

**Standard 9: Professional Practice Evaluation**

The public health nurse evaluates one’s own nursing practice in relation to professional practice standards and guideline, relevant statutes, rules, and regulations.

**Standard 10: Collegiality and Professional Relationships**

The public health nurse establishes collegial partnerships while interacting with representatives of the population, organizations, and health and human services professionals, and contributes to the professional development of peers, students, colleagues, and others.

**Standard 11: Collaboration**

The public health nurse collaborates with representatives of the population, organizations, and health and human service professionals in providing for and promoting the health of the population.

**Standard 12: Ethics**

The public health nurse integrates ethical provisions in all areas of practice.

**Standard 13: Research**

The public health nurse integrates research findings into practice.

**Standard 14: Resource Utilization**

The public health nurse considers factors related to safety, effectiveness, cost, and impact on practice and on the population in the planning and delivery of nursing and public health programs, policies, and services.

**Standard 15: Leadership**

The public health nurse provides leadership in nursing and public health.

**Standard 16: Advocacy**

The public health nurse advocates protecting the health, safety, and rights of the population.

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In addition to practice directly related to the field of nursing, PHNs embrace the principles associated with the science of public health. For nurses new to public health, an invaluable resource to study is **the Local Public Health Institute of Massachusetts (LPHI).** Go to [Local Public Health Institute of Massachusetts (bu.edu)](https://sites.bu.edu/masslocalinstitute/newtopublichealth/) to explore this comprehensive resource.

To start with, The **Foundations for Local Public Health Practice** ([Orientation to LPH in MA |LPHI](https://sites.bu.edu/masslocalinstitute/2011/01/15/orientation-to-local-public-health-in-massachusetts/) ) is an introductory course for public health staff, members of governing bodies, professionals new to the field, and professionals with experience and an interest in advancing their knowledge and skills. The [Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health (SCLRPH)](https://www.mass.gov/orgs/special-commission-on-local-and-regional-public-health#:~:text=The%20Special%20Commission%20on%20Local,the%20delivery%20of%20public%20health) recommended that the Foundations course be offered across the state to anyone new to local public health in Massachusetts and those who carry out routine and emergency environmental and population-focused health functions.

