

Comparison of key characteristics of hospital-based care providers

The purpose of this document is to compare and contrast qualifications, role, training and regulatory underpinnings of various hospital-based care providers. This document will be useful to administrators who wish to enhance their human resource composition to optimize patient care needs and achieve cost effectiveness.

| Characteristic | Nurse Practitioner | Physician's Assistant | Clinical Nurse Specialist | Physician |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Regulated health profession | Yes, RN(Extended Class) | No | Yes, RN (General Class) | Yes |
| Specialty Practice | Yes (Primary Care, Adult, Pediatric, or Anaesthesia) | No defined specialty | Yes, a wide range of clinical specialty applications within RN (general class) role. | Yes |
| Education | Baccalaureate degree in nursing + minimum of two years nursing experience + completion of NP university certificate and/or Master's/Doctorate program | Minimum two years of university study in any field + baccalaureate physician assistant degree. No health-care experience necessary. | Master's or Doctorate prepared, along with significant clinical experience and additional specialty education. | Baccalaureate degree (typically in sciences) + Doctor of Medicine degree + residency |
| Autonomous scope of practice (health assessment, diagnosis, prescription, order diagnostic tests, cast etc.) | Yes | No, physician extenders (Work under the direction of a physician to provide patient care) | Yes, within RN (general class) scope. Within expanded scope: no(work via authorizing mechanisms such as orders, medical directives). | Yes |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|-----|
| Accountability for practice | Yes | Shared | Yes Shared with nurse practitioner or physician if using authorizing mechanisms | Yes |
| Provides leadership in QI initiatives | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Provides mentorship to nursing staff and the inter-professional team | Yes | No, supports physicians | Yes | No |
| Provides health assessment | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Orders diagnostics | Yes, with few limitations | Under direction/authorization of physician | May initiate medical directive for some diagnostics under specific situations | Yes |
| Orders therapeutics/treatments | Yes, with few limitations (e.g. controlled substances) | Under direction/authorization of physician | May initiate medical directive for some treatments under specific situations | Yes |
| Admits patients to hospital | Yes | Not independently | No | Yes |
| Discharges patients from hospital | Yes | Not independently | No | Yes |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Refers to specialists | Yes | Under direction/ authorization of physician | No | Yes |
| Health promotion | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Compensation | Salary from global budget, Ministry funded | Salary from global budget, Ministry funded | Salary from global budget, Ministry funded | OHIP billing, global budget stipend for leadership roles |