Minneapolis VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
FUNCTIONAL STATEMENT AND COMPETENCY EVALUATION

Chief Nurse
Mental Health
Nurse IV

Qualifications: Meets VA standards (MP-5, Part 11, Chapter 2) for employment including
citizenship, RN licensure, health standards, education, (NLNAC or CCNE accredited; or
graduate of a school of professional nursing approved by the appropriate state accrediting agency
at the time the program was completed by the applicant and waiver required), English language
proficiency and references. Master’s degree in Nursing; or Master’s degree in a related field with
a BSN required. Four to five years experience preferred with demonstrated competence in
progressively more responsible leadership assignments.

Accountable to: This nurse is directly accountable to the Director of Mental Health, and has accountability to the
Associate Director Patient Care Services/Nurse Executive (ADPCS), for the clinical and
administrative functions of his/her role.

Position Summary: The Chief Nurse of Mental Health provides primary assistance to the Director of MH and
ADPCS in overall administration of Patient Care Services/Nursing Services and in guiding the
overall management of the practice of nursing and the profession of nursing within the VA
Minneapolis Health Care System. The breadth and scope of the CN role extends into all major
practice areas, i.e. clinical, administrative, research, and education. This nurse provides a key
leadership role in statewide management and supervision of Mental Health patient care programs,
and manages nursing and ancillary personnel and resources within the service areas. Functions
include planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and evaluating programs and outcomes;
regular attention to complex personnel management problems; participation in executive level
decision making deliberations; directs the integration of nursing and patient care activities in the
mutual development and achievement of organizational goals and policy development; and,
provides guidance and direction oversight for the development, implementation and maintenance
of established standards of nursing practice. This nurse participates in clinical and environmental
rounds to evaluate organizational care delivery identifying opportunities for program
improvement, effectiveness, and to assess the therapeutic milieu and safety in clinical areas. This
nurse guides the integration of nursing and other care activities towards an interdisciplinary team
approach to achieve organizational goals for quality patient care services across the continuum of
care, i.e., inpatient, specialty care, and outpatient. The CN coordinates the assessment, planning,
implementation, and evaluations of multiple services and systems. The CN collaborates with
other hospital service chiefs and medical staff leadership to ensure safe and efficient patient care.
This nurse implements standards of professional nursing practice and participates in policy
development related to professional nursing practice on community, regional, and national levels.
The CN establishes and maintains key relationships to assist nurse managers and APRN’s to
carry out the functions and activities expected of them. This nurse maintains and promotes
effective labor and management relations participating in negotiation agreements as appropriate. This nurse may act on behalf of the ADPCS in her/his absence. Specific practice settings or communities of care, for direct administrative assignment include the acute care settings of inpatient psych care, outpatient Behavioral Health, CBOC’s, Methadone Clinics, Tele-health medicine, Homelessness programs and other programs as assigned.

Scope: The Scope of Practice of the CN MH is defined by the four dimensions outlined in the VA Handbook 5005, dated 3/17/2009, and are specific to the grade as follows:

NURSE IV: Executes leadership that is characterized by substantial and continuous responsibility and accountability for population groups or integrated programs that cross service and/or discipline lines and influences organizational mission and health care.

This nurse has progressively more responsible leadership assignments and s/he will be responsible for the delivery of Mental Health nursing care in the Minneapolis VA Health Care System and collaborating with the ADPCS in ensuring staff nurses throughout the system in all areas of clinical practice are practicing in a manner as defined by the four dimensions/nine qualifications and as specified for their grade and level.

**DIMENSION OF NURSING PRACTICE: PRACTICE**

I. PRACTICE (Practice, Ethics, Resource Utilization)
   - Uses an analytical framework, such as the nursing process, to create an environment that facilitates the delivery of care. Coordinates and evaluates integrated programs or demonstrates clinical excellence in management of population groups.
   - Provides leadership in addressing ethical issues that impacts clients and staff in or beyond the organization and the local health care community.
   - Designs, modifies, and implements systems compatible with professional standards and with the mission, and goals of the organization to improve the cost-effective use of resources.

   a. Provides executive input in the strategic planning, budget, mission, operational planning, and policy development for local and network efforts.

   b. Utilizes current trends and relevant theories in an analytical framework to design/modify, implement, and measure integrated programs and activities to achieve clinical and administrative goals of the medical center and/or network. Evaluates outcomes against strategic priorities.

   c. Provides guidance, reviews and edits materials, programs, and projects produced by assigned personnel.
d. Implements appropriate disciplinary actions when employees do not adhere to safe work practices.

e. Demonstrates substantial and continuous responsibility for directing and managing an integrated program.

f. Acts on behalf of the AD, Patient Care Services/Nurse Executive when requested and/or attends scheduled committee meetings, representing Patient Care Services in discussion and decision making.

g. Consultant to medical center staff and greater community in areas of expertise.

h. Active in clinical and environmental rounds in order to evaluate health care system-wide care delivery, identifies opportunities for program improvement and effectiveness, and assesses the therapeutic milieu and safety in clinical areas.

i. Assumes a leadership role in resolving highly complex ethical issues that have an impact upon the health care delivery system and/or the consumer within the organization and/or the community.

j. Provides leadership in the development of policies and systems to devise strategies that will enable the organization to successfully manage bioethical issues and protect patient and family rights.

k. Demonstrates a commitment to EEO principles and applies EEO principles in all decisions, such as hiring practices.

l. Identifies those persons or practices that may cause actual or potential harm to the patients and instigates improvement processes.

m. Safeguards patient privacy and maintains confidentiality of all electronic and printed patient information according to HIPAA guidelines, and the Privacy Act. Maintains confidentiality of assigned access codes and by exiting out of the computer system when leaving the terminal. Does not share security codes and assures all staff only uses computers under their security codes. Maintains patient and employee confidentiality by discussing information with authorized staff only. Ensures application of institutional policies to protect information from unauthorized release, loss, alteration, or deletion. Does not use thumb-drives or other means, such as xeroxing, to remove patient data from the medical center.

n. Establishes unit councils in areas of responsibility to facilitate the national Staffing Methodology to launch appropriate staffing levels. Expected member of the facility panel to recommend staffing levels to Associate Director, Patient Care Services.
o. Gives daily attention to complex personnel management, administrative, or clinical problems within assigned area. Evaluates impact of problem-solving strategies on unit productivity.

p. Aggregates data and participates in the budget process to plan for current, emerging, and future resource requirements (financial, human, materiel, and/or informational).

q. Provides leadership in determining allocation of resources (financial, human, materiel, and/or informational) based on patient care systems that produce high quality outcomes.

r. Manages the resources (financial, human, materiel, and/or informational) of a complex program or service in a manner which applies professional standards of practice in the most effective, efficient method resulting in positive outcomes.

s. Ensures staff complies with infection control practices, such as hand washing and wearing of appropriate personal protective equipment. Demonstrates safe work practices. Complies with safety rules and regulations for safe job performance and fire protection. Ensures staff practices safe body mechanics, uses mechanical devices, and/or requests help when needed in moving, lifting, or turning patients to prevent injury to patient, self, or others. Encourages prompt reporting of all accidents and reporting of unsafe or unhealthy environmental situations/conditions. Expert in the ASISTS process. Corrects safety hazards promptly. Puts broken equipment out of service immediately, tags it as such, and follows through for appropriate disposition of the broken equipment.

t. Evaluates the need for and recommends cost efficient additions, modifications, or replacements for equipment and supplies necessary for a system of safe effective patient care delivery.

u. Conserves resources effectively by using supplies and equipment in a responsible manner. Will ensure employees follow appropriate standard operating procedures related to the equipment, devices, and work practices that impact or have the potential to impact the environment. Will comply with relevant environmental regulations, Executive Orders, and Green Environmental Management Systems (GEMS) initiatives. Will consider environmentally preferable recycled products in all purchasing decisions.

DIMENSION OF NURSING PRACTICE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

II. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (Education/Career Development, Performance)

- Develops staff for career progression. Forecasts new knowledge needs for changing practice environments/populations groups. Plans, implements, and evaluates strategies to meet those needs.
- Implements standards of practice and accrediting bodies and applicable regulations.

a. Mentors and/or precepts staff.

b. Collaborates in the establishment of and supports a system for recognition of accomplishments and
achievements by employees.

c. Participates in the development of education programs and staff development models to facilitate career progression and to increase productivity and performance.

d. Guides supervisory staff in writing counseling letters and plans for performance improvement insuring all documentation is completed in a timely manner and reflects progressive actions.

e. Assesses, plans, implements, and evaluates education strategies to meet complex care needs within changing practice environments for diverse population groups.

f. Fosters a nurturing learning relationship with Nurse Managers and other nurse leaders.

g. Assesses and provides for own educational needs to ensure competence in current and future functional role responsibility in a dynamic health care environment.

h. Evaluates and updates functional statements, position descriptions, and competencies for areas of responsibility. Ensure staff performance evaluations are timely and accurate with monthly monitoring.

i. Actively promotes the EEO Program to assure fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of personnel management. Assures lines of communication are open to all employees under his/her supervision on an equal basis.

j. Ensures compliance with quality measures, The Joint Commission, and other accreditation standards through appropriate interpretation to staff within assigned areas.

k. Manages complex personnel matters while maintaining the dignity of the constituents and upholding the intentions of governing directives.

l. Provides expertise for the implementation of standards of practice and standards of care.

**DIMENSION OF NURSING PRACTICE: COLLABORATION**

III. COLLABORATION (Collaboration, Collegiality)

- Demonstrates leadership in developing productive working relationships with groups in other programs, services, academic settings, and community agencies.
- Contributes to the professional growth and development of colleagues and other health care providers at the local, regional, state, or national level.

a. Provides a leadership role in professional, community, and governmental bodies that shape health care policy, contributing to the development/improvement of the healthcare delivery system and better patient outcomes.

b. Develops systems and processes to support staff participation in interdisciplinary work groups. Fosters a
climate for practice that enhances job satisfaction through mutual responsibility for productivity and quality improvement.

c. Manages planned and imposed change in an effective manner, assisting the consumer within the organization and/or community to move through the change process.

d. Functions as a liaison between Patient Care Services and the medical and support staff in their assigned areas.

e. Maintains and encourages effective labor-management partnerships and participates in negotiation of agreements as requested.

f. Actively supports and role models Patient-Family Centered Care concepts.

g. Develops, implements, and maintains formal and informal communication systems with a wide constituency of colleagues.

h. Solicits and synthesizes input from all levels of staff and addresses issues and barriers that impact on quality of care, productivity, and professional development.

i. Assumes leadership within the profession through involvement in professional organizations and the academic community.

j. Shares expertise within and/or external to the organization by leading interdisciplinary groups such as committees, task forces, projects, formal teaching, publishing, or professional activities.

**DIMENSION OF NURSING PRACTICE: SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY**

**IV. SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY (Quality of Care, Research)**

- Provides leadership in improving and sustaining the quality and effectiveness of care in diverse or complex programs.
- Collaborates with staff, other disciplines, faculty and peers in developing, conducting, evaluating research activities and programs.

a. Identifies outcomes that can be improved or leads the performance improvement process to improve and/or sustain clinical and administrative outcomes.

b. Responds effectively to patient/families expressing concern related to patient care.

c. Identifies, develops, and/or initiates programs to ensure a safe and therapeutic environment for patients and staff.

d. Provides leadership in the development, implementation, and review/revision of policies, protocols, procedures, standards of care, and competencies for complex and diverse integrated programs and evaluates
operational outcomes.

e. Uses internal and external customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction indicators to drive improvement.

f. Provides leadership in research utilization in the areas of nursing, health and/or management systems which are congruent with the organization’s mission, vision, and goals.

g. Assumes a leadership role in fostering evidence-based clinical nursing practice promoting improved patient outcomes.

h. Maintains knowledge base of applicable research.

i. Evaluates research findings and modifies clinical, administrative, and organizational systems to promote utilization of findings.

j. Conducts evaluative assessments of clinical programs in relation to defined goals focused on systems improvement, patient outcomes, and/or staff development.

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Helen Pearlman
Associate Director, PCS / Nurse Executive