



NURSING AND MIDWIFERY COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

(Nurses and Midwives Act, 2019)

2024

NURSING CARE STANDARDS



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FOREWORD

Nursing practice has evolved over the years to reflect diverse expectations from the consumers of the services. The profession has also been faced with the dynamics of the disease burden which calls for adherence to standards if Universal Health Coverage and quality care could be attained. It is therefore important that clear and concise standards that reflect the current state of the Nursing Profession and the milieu in which the Nurse operates are set.

The standards outlined in this document provide a framework for assessing and improving the quality of Nursing services. The standards also serve as a guide for professional development and lifelong learning. Nurses are encouraged to become familiar with these standards and to incorporate them into their daily practice. By adhering to the nursing standards, patients are assured of the highest quality care possible and nurses can continue to advance the profession.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Katowa'.

PROFESSOR PATRICIA KATOWA MUKWATO

BOARD CHAIRPERSON

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to start by expressing my gratitude to all the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Zambia (NMCZ) heads of departments, units, and regional offices who participated in the drafting of the Nursing Standards. On behalf of the NMCZ staff, I also wish to extend special thanks to the team of technical staff from the School of Nursing Sciences - UNZA, MoH, Higher Education Institutions, Defense Force Medical Services - Ministry of Defense, and Nurses and Midwives from Cancer Disease Hospital (CDH), and National Heart Hospital (NHH), who provided much-needed input into the development of these standards. This process would not have been possible without the financial and logistical support from UNFPA. We shall remain indebted to them.

The NMCZ Management team recognizes the importance of having Nursing Standards in place to guide nursing practice. Therefore, I call upon all HEIs to adhere to and promote the use of these standards for sustained quality nursing practice.



Beauty Siansende Zimba (Mrs.)

ACTING REGISTRAR AND CEO

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

1.	ABG	Arterial Blood Gas
2.	ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
3.	BCC	Behavioural Change and Communication
4.	BP	Blood Pressure
5.	CDA	Controlled Drug Act
6.	cPAP	Continuous Positive Airway Pressure
7.	CPD	Continuous Professional Development
8.	ECG	Electrocardiogram
9.	ENT	Ear Nose and Throat
10.	GCS	Glasgow Coma Scale
11.	HDU	High Dependency Unit
12.	HNP	HIV Nurse Practitioner
13.	ICU	Intensive Care Unit
14.	IEC	Information Education and Communication
15.	IPC	Infection Prevention and Control
16.	NMCZ	Nursing and Midwifery Council of Zambia
17.	OIs	Opportunistic Infections
18.	OPD	Out-Patient Department
19.	PHN	Public Health Nurse
20.	POP	Plaster of Paris
21.	HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
22.	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Assessment: organized systematic and continuous process of making observations and measurements of nursing services against established standards. Assessment includes the use of interviews, observations, physical examination and investigations.

Code of Ethics: stipulates expected standard of professional behaviour from nurses and midwives.

Dialysate: is a solution of pure water, electrolytes and salts that is used to pull toxins (impurities) from the blood during dialysis through diffusion.

Evidence-based care: Providing holistic, quality care based on the most up-to-date research and knowledge rather than traditional methods, advice from colleagues, or personal beliefs.

Geriatric Nursing: Is a field of Nursing concerned with improving and maintaining the health of older adult patients.

High Dependency Unit: is a specialized unit designed to provide intensive monitoring, treatment and Nursing care for patients who require a higher level of medical attention and support than what is typically provided on a general ward.

HIV Nurse Practitioner: a nurse who is qualified and competent to provide ART services in Zambia.

Palliative care: is an interdisciplinary medical care approach aimed at optimizing quality of life and mitigating suffering among people with serious, complex, and often terminal illnesses.

Peri-Operative Care: Is the practice of patient-centered multidisciplinary, and integrated medical care of surgical patients that includes pre, intra and post-operative care.

Scope of Practice: the range of roles, functions, responsibilities and activities that a registered/licensed professional is educated for, competent in and is authorized to perform.

SMART Care: SmartCare is an integrated electronic medical record system with many variants for usage in different Health Institution departments.

Standard: an agreed level of performance to achieve a specific outcome standard (WHO 2022)

Therapeutic relationship: an enabling interaction that facilitates the achieving of optimal health for the client.

Triage Early Warning Score Charts: a chart for scoring the Six (6) physiological measurements (respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, systolic blood pressure, pulse rate, level of consciousness or new-onset confusion and temperature) that are routinely recorded at the patient's bedside to identify acutely ill patients.

INTRODUCTION

The Nursing and Midwifery Council of Zambia (NMCZ) developed standards for Nursing care to guide the expected quality of care by nurses at all levels of service delivery. Development of standards was guided by the Nurses and Midwives Act No. 10 of 2019. The standards of Professional Nursing practice are authoritative statements of action and behaviour that all nurses regardless of role, population served, specialty and setting are expected to perform competently. These standards define a competent level of nursing practice based on the nursing process model that promotes critical thinking among nurses and defines who the Nurse is. The use of these standards will help nurses to plan, implement and assess the quality of nursing care. It will also define the Nurses' accountability to society, consumers of nursing services, and the government, including to the nursing profession and its members.

This document describes the major standards of nursing practice namely; professional ethics, legal and nursing practice, care provision and management and professional development and quality management.

It is therefore expected that all Nurses will engage in the activities specified based on their scope of practice.

PURPOSE OF THE NURSING STANDARDS

1. To promote, guide and direct professional Nursing practice
2. To guide the monitoring of the quality of nursing services.
3. To be utilised for advocacy for improved nursing practice

CORE VALUES OF PRACTICE FOR NURSES

Core values serve as a foundation for ethical decision-making, professional conduct, and the provision of patient-centered care in the field of nursing. All Nurses are responsible for adherence to the prescribed core values. They guide nurses in navigating complex healthcare environments while upholding the principles that define their profession. These core values include, but are not limited to, the following;

1.Compassion: Nurses demonstrate empathy, understanding, and a genuine concern for the well-being of their patients. Compassion involves recognizing and alleviating the suffering of others.

2.Respect: Nurses respect the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual. This includes respecting cultural diversity, personal preferences, and the autonomy of patients.

3.Integrity: Integrity in nursing involves honesty, accountability, and ethical behaviour. Nurses adhere to a code of ethics and maintain the trust and confidence of patients and the broader community.

4.Advocacy: Nurses advocate for the rights and well-being of their patients. This includes ensuring that patients are informed about their healthcare options, supporting their choices, and speaking up on their behalf when necessary.

5.Excellence: Striving for excellence in nursing practice involves a commitment to continuous learning, professional development, and the delivery of high-quality, evidence-based care.

6.Collaboration: Nurses work collaboratively with other healthcare professionals, patients, and their families to achieve the best possible outcomes. Effective communication and teamwork are essential components of collaboration.

7.Safety: Patient safety is a top priority in nursing. Nurses follow established protocols, identify and mitigate risks, and contribute to a culture of safety within healthcare settings.

8.Professionalism: Professionalism encompasses qualities such as accountability, responsibility, and a commitment to maintaining the standards and values of the nursing profession. It involves upholding a positive image of nursing and contributing to the overall integrity of the profession.

9.Empathy: Beyond compassion, empathy involves the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. It helps nurses connect with their patients on a deeper level, fostering effective communication and therapeutic relationships.

10.Cultural Competence: is the ability for Nurses to recognize and respect the diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and values of their patients. Cultural competence promotes effective communication and improves the overall quality of care.

NURSING CARE STANDARDS

CORE COMPETENCES FOR THE REGISTERED NURSE

Core Competencies has three main domains and sub domains and are associated with a person who is newly qualified in the particular role of nursing:

Main domain 1: Professional, ethical and legal practice

Competency areas:

- i. Accountability
- ii. Ethical practice
- iii. Legal practice

Main domain 2: Care provision and management

Competency areas:

- i. Health promotion
- ii. Assessment
- iii. Planning
- iv. Implementation
- v. Evaluation
- vi. Therapeutic communication and relationships and management
- vii. Interprofessional health care
- viii. Delegation and supervision
- ix. Safe environment.

Main domain 3: Professional, personal and quality development

Competency areas:

- i. Enhancement of the profession
- ii. Quality improvement
- iii. Continuing education

DOMAIN ONE: Professional, Ethical and Legal Practice

Standard 1.1: Professional Practice

The Nurse demonstrates autonomy, responsibility, commitment and compassion in the effective management of clients in all settings to ensure quality of care.

Competency areas:

- a. Accepts accountability for own professional judgment, actions, outcomes of care and Continued competence in accordance with scope of practice, increased responsibility, legislative acts and regulations
- b. Recognizes the limits of scope of practice and own competence
- c. Seeks guidance from the appropriate others when encountering situations beyond own knowledge, competence or scope of practice.
- d. Recognizes and respects different levels of accountability for the range of available personnel.
- e. Participates in activities related to improving the access to the range of services required for effective health services

Standard 1.2: Ethical practice

Nursing care is provided by qualified and competent Nurses to ensure safety of the client and the work environment. The Nurse applies the principles of the Professional Code of Ethics in order to uphold professionalism.

Competency areas:

- a. Practices in a manner that conforms to the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Zambia (NMCZ) Code of Ethics, the professional and the employer's code of conduct
- b. Engages in effective ethical decision-making with respect to own professional responsibilities or where ethical issues affect the broader health care team.
- c. Maintains confidentiality and security of written, verbal and electronic information acquired in a professional capacity.
- d. Respects the client's right to privacy and dignity
- e. Respects the client's right to information, choice and self-determination in nursing and health care.
- f. Challenges behavior and health care practice that could compromise client safety, privacy or dignity.

Standard 1.3: Legal practice

The Nurse advocates for the rights of Nurses and clients to make the practice settings safe and ensure equity of justice. The Nurse is responsible for renewing the practice certificate annually and to participate in Continued Professional Development as stipulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Zambia.

Competency areas

- a. Practice within the provisions of the Nurses and Midwives Act No.10 of 2019 and the Scope of Nursing and Midwifery practice
- b. Practices in accordance with local (institutional) policies and procedural guidelines
- c. Adheres to national legislation and regulations related to health

DOMAIN TWO: CARE PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT

Standard 2.1: Health Promotion

Competency Area

- a. Maintains own health and personal fitness for/at work
- b. Cooperates with nurses, other professionals and community groups in activities to reduce illness and promote healthy life styles and environments.
- c. Incorporates into practice a perspective that takes account of the multiple determinants of health.

Standard 2.2: Assessment

Competency areas

- a. Gathers accurate and relevant objective and subjective data through systematic health and nursing assessments
- b. Organizes, synthesizes, analyses, and interprets data from different sources to derive at nursing diagnosis and determine a care plan.
- c. Shares and documents findings accurately and in a timely manner complying with professional standards and organizational policies

Standard 2.3: Planning

Competency areas

- a. Formulates a comprehensive care plan with identified care outcomes based on nursing diagnoses, findings from a nursing and health assessment, inputs from other health team members, and nursing practice standards
- b. Applies critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills underpinned by knowledge of nursing and other disciplines to the care planning process
- c. Establishes priorities for care in collaboration with other care providers and clients
- d. Involves clients where possible in care planning ensuring that they receive accurate, understandable information on which to base consent for care.
- e. Involves and advocate when clients, families or carers request support or have limited abilities in decision-making, giving informed consent, or where there is a language barrier.
- f. Regularly reviews and revises the care plan, where possible in collaboration with other members of the health/social health team, and clients
- g. Maintains a current, accurate care plan and related records

Standard 2.4: Evaluation

Competency areas

- a. Monitors and documents progress toward expected outcomes accurately and completely
- b. In consultation with clients, families and/or carers, and health team members, evaluates progress towards planned outcomes
- c. Uses evaluation data to modify the care plan

Standard 2.5: Therapeutic Communications and Interpersonal Relationships

Competency areas

- a. Initiates, develops and discontinues therapeutic relationships through the use of appropriate communication and interpersonal skills.
- b. Maintains a relationship that respects the boundary between clients and self.
- c. Listens to others in an unbiased manner, respects points of view of others, and promotes the expression of diverse opinions and perspectives.
- d. Communicates clear, consistent and accurate information verbally, or in written and electronic forms, that falls within professional responsibility and maintains confidence in care.
- e. Interacts in a manner that is respectful and culturally appropriate to the clients, family and/or carers from diverse cultural backgrounds
- f. Facilitates access to information or refers request to the appropriate person
- g. Communicates and shares relevant information, including views of clients, families and/or carers with other health team members involved in providing services

Standard 2.6: Leadership and Management

Competency areas

- a. Advocates for and acts within span of control to create a positive working environment
- b. Adapts leadership style and approaches to different situations
- c. Confronts conflict in a non-judgmental fashion, making effective use of communication skills and existing mechanisms to achieve resolution
- d. Contributes to team leadership by reinforcing goals so as to promote respect and confidence among the team.
- e. Able to articulate own leadership contributions and support expectations of other team members.
- f. Prioritizes workload and manages time effectively.
- g. Contributes to the review and modification of current organizational and practice policies and procedures currently in force.
- h. Contributes to education and professional development of students and colleagues in the work place.
- i. Advocates for and acts within span of control to create a positive working environment
- j. Provides feedback, offer suggestions for changes and deals effectively with the impact of change in own practice or in/on the organization

Standard 2.7: Safe environment

Competency areas

- a. Uses appropriate assessment tools to identify actual and potential risks to safety and reports concerns to the relevant authority
- b. Takes timely action through the use of quality improvement risk management strategies to create and maintain safe care environment and meet national legislation and workplace health and safety requirements, policies and procedures
- c. Ensures the safe and proper storage, administration and recording of therapeutic substances.
- d. Administers and records medication, assesses side-effects and titrates dosages in accordance with authorized prescriptions.
- e. Complies with infection prevention procedures and challenges breaches in other practitioners' practice
- f. Knows responsibilities and procedures to follow in the event a disaster is declared.

Standard 2.8: Delegation and supervision

Competency area

- a. Delegates to others, activities according to ability, level of preparation, proficiency and legal scope of practice.
- b. Accepts delegated activities in line with personal level of proficiency and legal scope of practice.
- c. Monitors and uses a range of supportive strategies including precepting when supervising and/or monitoring delegated care.
- d. Maintains accountability and responsibility when delegating aspects of care to others
- e. Contributes to policy and protocol development that relates to delegation of clinical responsibilities.

Standard 2.9: Inter-Professional HealthCare

- a. Understands and values the roles, knowledge and skills of members of the health team in relation to own responsibilities.
- b. Works collaboratively with other professionals in health care to enhance nursing and other health services being accessed by clients.
- c. Uses knowledge of effective inter –and intra-professional working practices.
- d. Presents and supports the views of clients, families and/or carers during decision making by the inter-professional team.
- e. Refers clients to ensure patients/clients have access to best available interventions.

DOMAIN THREE: PROFESSIONAL, PERSONAL AND QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

Standard 3.1: Quality Improvement

Competency Areas

- a. follows evidence-based and best practice guidelines in the delivery of nursing practice.
- b. Participates in quality improvement and quality assurance procedures.

Standard 3.2: Continuing Education:

Competency areas

- a. Undertakes regular review of own practice by engaging in reflection, critical examination and evaluation and seeking peer review.
- b. Assumes responsibility for lifelong learning, own professional development and maintenance of competence
- c. Takes opportunities to learn with others contributing to health care

Standard 3.3: Enhancement of the profession

Competency areas

- a. Promotes dissemination, use, monitoring and review of professional standards and best practice guidelines
- b. Promotes and maintains a positive image of nursing
- c. Acts as an effective role model for students and within the care team.
- d. Acts as a resource for students, other members of the health team and the public.
- e. Values research in contributing to developments in nursing and uses findings as means to improving standards of care.
- f. Scans practice environment and nursing literature to identify emerging trends and issues.
- g. Engages in advocacy activities through the professional organization to influence health and social care service policies and access to services.

SUMMARY

The Nursing Care Standards document outlines the benchmarks and expectations for nursing practice to ensure high-quality patient care. It encompasses guidelines, principles, and performance criteria that nurses are expected to adhere to in their professional roles. The standards address

various aspects of nursing care, including assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation of patient care. They also cover communication, ethical considerations, and collaboration with other healthcare professionals. The document serves as a comprehensive reference for Nurses, promoting consistency and excellence in healthcare delivery while emphasizing patient safety and well-being.

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