

NATIONAL EMERGENCY NURSES ASSOCIATION



Position Statement	Role and Use of Non-RN Care Providers in the Emergency Department
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Issue

Some acute care facilities utilize non-Registered Nurse Care providers to provide primary care in Emergency Departments. This may occur for various reasons including: financial constraints, boarding of admitted patients, and/or lack of Registered Nurses (RNs). Evidence supports that a higher ratio of RN staffing is directly related to improved patient outcomes, lower mortality rates and reduced overall costs. The impact of the use of non-RN personnel within emergency departments can influence the quality of care, patient's perceptions of satisfaction with care, pain management, preventable complications, patient education and length of stay in hospital.

NENA Position

NENA values the role of other nursing and allied health providers as an adjunct to a multidisciplinary care team in the Emergency Department (ED).

NENA does not endorse replacing RNs with non-RN primary care providers for the care of patients in the ED.

NENA supports the utilization of non-registered nursing staff to perform delegated tasks.

NENA believes that budgetary constraints and, at times limited supply of Emergency Nurses, should not be used as rationale for inappropriate delegation to non-RN healthcare providers or substitution of RN in the Emergency setting.

NENA believes that all patients seen in the ED deserve comprehensive care by appropriately educated RNs. The patient's status may change quickly and will require the knowledge and skills of an emergency RN.

Rationale

Emergency nursing practice includes the assessment, diagnosis, treatment and evaluation of patients of all ages with perceived, actual or potential emergent, urgent and non-urgent physical or psychological alterations of health, which are undiagnosed or require further intervention. (Canadian Nurses Association 2001)

The National Emergency Nurses Association is the organization recognized by the Canadian Nurses Association to represent the profession and specialty of Emergency Nursing in Canada.

The National Emergency Nurses Association is committed to the advancement of Emergency Nursing practice and emergency care. NENA is responsible for defining the role of the Emergency Nurse, and in assisting the Emergency Nurse in the implementation of that role.

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References

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