

Wm. S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital
Madison, WI

Expectations of Registered Nurses at the Madison VA

This document describes the expectations that professional registered nurses have of each other as employees of the Madison VA. Our overriding principle is that we put patients first and that our expectations reflect current national practice standards and organizational policies.

Patient Safety:

1. Participate in our efforts to maintain a safe environment for patients, visitors, volunteers and staff. Learn and follow the procedures to meet all patient safety goals.
2. Administer medications, blood and blood products consistent with current nursing standards and procedures by asking patient to state his/her name, last four digits of his/her social security number or birth date.
3. Maintain the patient care records by documenting assessments, reassessments, care planning, interventions and evaluations.
4. Actively participate in PI/QI projects at the unit, nursing service, hospital and VISN level to continually improve the care we deliver to our veteran patients.
5. Address any potential or actual patient safety concerns with a sense of urgency.

Technical Quality of Care:

1. Achieve patient outcomes that consistently meet or exceed generally accepted professional nursing standards as defined by comparative data, nursing literature and the results of current research.
2. Provide for patient comfort including prompt and effective management of acute and chronic pain in coordination with other caregivers.
3. Understand the role of the Nursing Practice Council and implement the evidence-based protocols, policies and procedures that the Council recommends.
4. Continually find ways to improve patient care through critical thinking and process improvement. Effective process improvement requires the participation of every RN in all areas of practice.

Service Quality:

1. Utilize the resources and written tools available for nurse-to-nurse handoffs.
2. Actively involve the patient in all aspects of care. Advocate for the patient by ensuring consults are addressed expediently and accurately.
3. Meet education needs of the patient and family.
4. Learn and use therapeutic communication skills. Communicate effectively with patients and their families and other members of the health care team.
5. Discuss end-of-life issues including advance directives and use the interdisciplinary team to advocate for the patient's wishes. Refer issues to the hospital Ethics Committee when warranted. When decisions are made by the patient or the patient's family regarding end-of-life, honor these decisions.
6. Utilize expert consultation services such as Nurse Case Managers, Palliative Care and Wound Care Nurses.
7. Strive to promote a clean, uncluttered, calm, therapeutic milieu to promote patient and family well being and healing.

Resource Utilization:

1. Strive to provide quality patient care that is cost effective.
2. Assist in the coordination of care to provide for the appropriate, safe and timely care throughout the continuum of care.
3. Provide accurate, timely discharge instructions in collaboration with other caregivers.

Peer and Co-Worker Relationships:

1. At all times act in a professional, confidential and respectful manner with patients and their family, visitors, volunteers, physicians, other nurses, administrators, and other hospital personnel to enhance a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect and trust among members of the patient care team. Refrain from using personal cell phones and other handheld devices during classes and while giving patient care. Refrain from excessive use of the internet for personal use. Refrain from discussing personal issues with the patient.
2. Recognize inappropriate behavior that is impulsive, disruptive, sexually harassing, abusive, or disrespectful and respond appropriately by giving direct feedback and report the behavior to a supervisor in a timely manner. Recognize situations that require immediate intervention.
3. Documentation in the medical record should reflect the clinical status of the patient and the plan of care. All language will be objective and professional in documenting patient care and condition.
4. Recognize that disagreements are inevitable and can contribute to improving care. When disagreements occur, address these in a constructive, respectful and direct manner away from patients or other non-involved caregivers.
5. Respect patient privacy by not discussing patient care information and issues in public settings.

General Contributions to the Hospital, Nursing Service and our Community:

1. When contacted regarding concerns about patient care, respond in the spirit of continuous improvement.
2. Make positive contributions to the clinic and hospital by actively participating in nursing staff functions related to the three missions of patient care, teaching and research. Recognize that we are responsible for meeting our ongoing learning needs. Strive to become certified in your area of clinical specialty.
3. In the spirit of timely assistance, help to identify and refer issues affecting the physical and mental health of fellow staff members.
4. Understand and strive to continually learn about different cultural practices among our patients and staff. Demonstrate respect and tolerance of differences in beliefs, values, religion and culture.
5. Use ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses to guide your practice, which can be read on the internet, by searching in the American Nursing Association web site for ANA Code of Ethics. This is a “read only” document.