

The Specialty Practice of Nurse Life Care Planning

Status: Original Statement

Originated by: American Association of Nurse Life Care Planners (AANLCP®)

Adopted by: AANLCP® Executive Board

Summary: The purpose of this position statement is to define nurse life care planning as a Registered Nurse practice and assert that nurse life care planners therefore must maintain an active registered nurse license.

Introduction: This position statement is the culmination of the American Association of Nurse Life Care Planners® Executive Board, its membership dialogue about the scope of practice of nurse life care planners as a specialty practice and the many practice roles within this specialty as it pertains to direct and indirect patient care as well as consultation, education and expert testifying expert.

Background: The ANA's *Nursing's Social Policy Statement, The Essence of the Profession (2010)*, builds on previous work and provides the following contemporary definition of nursing:

Nursing is the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, communities, and populations. (Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice, 2010)

There are other ANA published professional resources that registered nurses, practicing in the United States, have adopted in their thinking and decision-making, which then guide their practice. These include *Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice (ANA, 2010)*, and *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements.*(ANA, 2001) Together these references provide the foundation for the definition of specialty nursing practice, including nurse life care planning.

Nurse Life Care Planning

The American Association of Nurse Life Care Planners (AANLCP®) defines nurse life care planning as the specialty practice in which the nurse life care planner utilizes the nursing process in the collection and analysis of comprehensive client specific data in the preparation of a dynamic document. This document provides an organized, concise plan that estimates for reasonable and necessary (and reasonably certain to be necessary) current and future healthcare needs with the associated costs and frequencies of goods and services. The nurse life care plan is developed for individuals who have experienced an injury or have chronic healthcare issues. Nurse life care planners function within their individual professional scope of practice and, when applicable, incorporate opinions arrived upon collaboratively with various health professionals. The nurse life care plan is considered a flexible document and is evaluated and updated as needed. (AANLCP®, 2008)

Utilizing our science-based education, Nurse Life Care Planners employ the nursing process or critical thinking methodology when developing a life care plan through the diagnosis and treatment of the human response to alleviate suffering, prevent future illness and injury while promoting and optimizing health and abilities, and advocating for care of the individual and their family. The nurse life care planner may delegate the implementation and ongoing evaluation of the life care plan to a registered nurse case manager, or other nurse life care planners. (AANLCP® Scope of Practice, 2011)

Nurse life care planners engage in a specialty nursing practice that covers many roles, directly and indirectly influencing patient outcomes. For example, the nurse life care planner serving as a testifying expert provides testimony on the facts of the nursing care needs, reasonable and necessary future care needs and costs for the injured or chronically ill person. In this role, the nurse life care planner educates the Trier of fact to these needs, which were identified via the nursing process, and provides evidence regarding the nurse life care plan contents. (AANLCP® Scope of Practice, 2011)

Nurse life care planners are not limited to practicing as expert witnesses. Their roles cross into case management, medical-legal, insurance and private industries. They work with trust administrators, health and workers' compensation insurance carriers, the federal government's National Vaccine Program, and private families to assist them with anticipating future care needs for their loved ones, both young and old. They develop medical cost projections which estimate future care needs to assist in settlement negotiations, estimating reserves, Medicare secondary payer compliance, and special needs trusts, utilizing the nursing process as their methodology. The potential for additional roles in the future is anticipated. (AANLCP® Scope of Practice, 2011)

The American Association of Nurse Life Care Planners

AANLCP® is a voluntary association of professional registered nurses interested in, and/or practicing, nurse life care planning. Other goals include:

- Promote excellence in nurse life care planning through education and research in nurse life care planning,
- Provide a common foundation for the nurse life care planner to unify the practice,
- Promote the practice of nurse life care planning within the medical-legal fields and communities,
- Provide standards for quality practice and facilitate ethical practice, (AANLCP® Scope of Practice, 2011)
- Recommend that nurse life care planners should take an active role in education and the certification process through the CNLCP® Certification Board.

Conclusion

Nurse life care planning is a growing nursing specialty practice. Registered nurses' extensive knowledge and experience in utilizing the nursing process makes for an excellent fit for the role of nurse life care planning. Nurse life care planners must maintain an active Registered Nurse license as an integral requirement of the practice discipline.

Resources

American Association of Nurse Life Care Planners, *Standards of Practice*, 2008, Salt Lake City, UT

American Association of Nurse Life Care Planners, *Scope of Practice*, 2011, Salt Lake City, UT

American Association of Nurse Life Care Planners, *Membership Guide*, 2008, Salt Lake City, UT

American Association of Nurse Life Care Planners, *Code of Professional Ethics and Conduct for Nurse Life Care Planners with Interpretive Statements*, AANLCP® Membership Guide, 2008

American Nurses Association, *Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice*, 2010, Silver Spring, MD

American Nurses Association, *Nursing's Social Policy Statement*, 2010, Silver Spring, MD

American Nurses Association,
<http://www.nursingworld.org/EspeciallyForYou/StudentNurses/RegisteredNurseLicensing.aspx>