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## Clinical Nurse Specialists: A Rare Breed

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# Clinical Nurse Specialists: A Rare Breed

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## What is a CNS?

- A clinical nurse specialist (CNS) is an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) with graduate level education in nursing.
- CNSs are prepared to provide leadership, consultation, and clinical expertise for patients and their families, nurses, and systems.
- Have the autonomy to diagnose and treat based on advanced clinical assessment like other APRNs (Nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, certified registered nurse anesthetists).
- CNS work in all areas of healthcare like clinics, emergency departments, hospital units, entire healthcare systems, or even as independent practitioners/contractors.

## Requirements in MN

- Licensure as a registered nurse AND an advanced practice registered nurse.
- Graduation from an accredited Graduate level (masters or doctoral) Clinical Nurse Specialist program.
- Board certification in area of specialty or population foci
  - Adult/Gerontology
  - Neonatal
  - Pediatrics



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## What do they do??

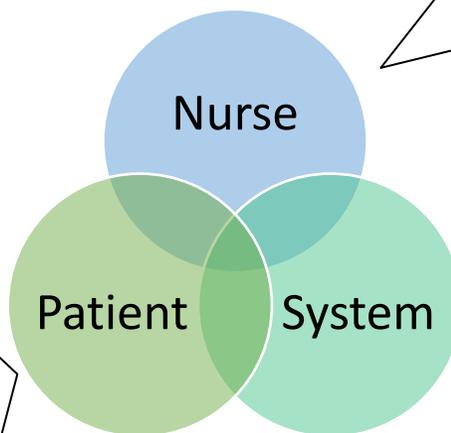
**Unique to CNS practice is a framework known as the three spheres of impact, Compared to other APRNs, who's training is focused on patient care, the work of a CNS is to identify and fix needs at the patient, nurse, and system levels of care.**

**The CNS role has an extensive reach, leading initiatives that impact quality measures and spearheading innovative practice.**

### Examples of how CNSs provide revenue:

- Bill for services
- Streamline nursing process to reduce waste
- Improve patient outcomes and decrease hospital length of stay by assisting with complex patient management
- Evaluate and implement new technology or services

- Complete comprehensive health assessment and provide plan of care
- Provide differential diagnosis and interventions to treat illness, symptoms and behaviors
- Educate and guide patients and family through health care decisions
- Facilitate resolution of ethical conflicts in complex patient care situation
- Advocate for patient's preferences and rights.



**CNSs can do what nurse practitioners can do... and more!**

- Provide consultation for complex care needs
- Assess nursing practice, environments, and processes/procedures for improvement opportunities
- Educate, coach, and mentor nurses
- Develop evidence-based practices, policies and or procedures
- Advocate for nurses

- Assist with managing change, practices, policies and procedures
- Collaborate with all disciplines
- Use evidence to advance practice
- Evaluates patient outcomes
- Conduct research
- Participate in quality improvement efforts

## CNSs Across CentraCare

Advanced critical thinking, diagnostic skills, prescriptive authority, leadership competence, and strong advocacy for nursing practice make CNSs extremely versatile and able to adapt to meet the everchanging needs of healthcare.

Roles CNSs have filled at CentraCare:

- Support a Unit or Section
- Advanced Practice Provider
- Director of Nursing Practice
- VP Performance Excellence
- Performance Improvement Clinical Consultant
- Unit Director, Senior Director
- Covid Operations Manager
- Program Management

Involvement examples:

- DNR workflows
- Sepsis, delirium
- Shared governance restructure
- Covid clinical pathways
- Order sets, policies, practice changes
- Hester Davis fall risk implementation

## References

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