

Missouri Findings

The Missouri state board of nursing defines preceptors as a registered professional nurse assigned to assist nursing students in an educational experience, which is designed and directed by a faculty member.

Preceptor requirements:

1. a professional R.N. license
2. oriented to role requirements
3. maximum of two students to one preceptor

Major implications

1. Eleven states had no mention of preceptors in their nursing education guidelines.
2. Criteria for preceptor selection should be well-defined to ensure appropriate preceptors are chosen.
3. Preceptor preparation is an important element.
4. Preceptor orientation is crucial: Expectations and role responsibilities must be clearly delineated.
5. Faculty are responsible to facilitate a supportive relationship with sensitivity to preceptor needs.
6. Preceptor work must be monitored, nurtured and supported.

Reference:

L'Ecuyer, K., von der Lancken, S., Malloy, D., Meyer, G. & Hyde, M (2018). Review of state board of nursing rules and regulations for nurse preceptors. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 57(3), 134-141.

Preceptors: What's New in the Literature?

The literature abounds with research on transition to practice, preceptors and preceptorship experiences. Of recent interest is the issue of requirements and regulations for preceptors. A team of nurse researchers recently completed a review of Board of Nursing rules and regulations for all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories for their published requirements regarding preceptors. Findings from this study are published in the *Journal of Nursing Education* (L'Ecuyer et al., 2018). This newsletter highlights this study, its major findings and implications.

Background

In addition to specific state requirements, preceptor qualifications and role expectations are outlined by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. Their recommendations outline licensing, academic, experiential, competencies and role model expectations. In addition, these documents describe the role of the faculty to communication expectations and to coach preceptors as needed. See Table 1 in published article (L'Ecuyer et al., 2018).

Study Questions

The purpose of the review of preceptor regulations initially was to better understand ongoing issues related to preceptor use. Some of those issues include: the most efficient utilization of preceptors, the optimal number of hours students need to spend with preceptors, selection and training requirements, as well as faculty roles in precepted clinical experiences. Specific research questions were: 1) What is the ratio of preceptor-student and faculty-student in a precepted undergraduate educational experience? 2) What are the requirements and role responsibilities of nurse preceptors in nursing education? 3) What are the requirements and role responsibilities of faculty in a precepted educational experience?

Major Findings

As expected, great variability was noted across all documents. Nine states and two territories had no mention of preceptors in their regulations. Fourteen states clearly defined preceptor. Twenty-nine states described the basic qualification of preceptor as a R.N. license. Seven states require one year of nursing experience, seven others require two years, one (Indiana) required three, and others were unspecified. Curricular requirements were specified by some states, most interesting was the states that require a preceptor orientation, and others specify that course objectives be shared with preceptors. Ratios for numbers of student per preceptor ranged from "appropriate" to one-to-one or two-to-one.