

MEN IN NURSING IN NEBRASKA



Photo courtesy of Vicky Cerino

CHARACTERISTICS OF NURSING MEN PARTICULARLY APPRECIATE

AUTONOMY – You choose: do you like to work for someone or do you like to work independently? As a nurse, you can choose to work in a place where you are given lots of direction or little oversight. In hospitals, you will be carrying out orders written by physicians. Of course, often the physician will request your recommendation about protocols and procedures. And the nurse is with the patient 24 hours, 7 days a week while the physician is there only minutes most days, so even with written orders, your good judgment is always required in processing orders and in making decisions independently. As a nurse practitioner or a nurse anesthetist, or in a school or distant clinic or rescue operation, you will be expected to make independent judgments every day.

Tim Timmons, BSN, RN, Health Department



“Nursing is a critical profession; healthcare wouldn’t be what it is without nurses. It is a demanding and challenging field that isn’t limited to one gender. Since I graduated from nursing school in 1974, I have been on the cutting edge of medicine, from the outbreak of HIV/AIDS to the current risk of bioterrorism. This profession keeps you interested, keeps you growing.”

EXCITEMENT – In an emergency department or in rescue work, there is always something going on that will keep your adrenaline rushing. On the other hand, working in a pediatric department or a cancer unit will provide plenty of excitement. Sometimes the excitement is hard charging; sometimes it is as gentle as a tiny hand grasping yours. You just never know.

Tom Dollison, RN



“Nursing offers many paths to choose from: flight nurse, critical care, management, hospice, administration, acute care, in-home care, oncology, geriatric care, politics. You can really find a specialty to utilize your strengths and interests. Nurses do an amazing variety of fulfilling and demanding things. I really enjoy my work and the people I work with very much want me to be there. I have been welcomed with open arms.”

TECHNOLOGY – There is ever-changing technology everywhere in health care! From the monitors that track patient vital signs and administer medications and interventions to the computer-based-records with which you record what you have done and its outcome, technology is becoming increasingly important in health care. And don’t fear that it’s all been developed yet. If you are interested in technology, there are lots of questions yet to be answered – like how best to convey what nurses do to a computer system so that it will record it accurately for later retrieval by someone who is caring for that patient, potentially years later.

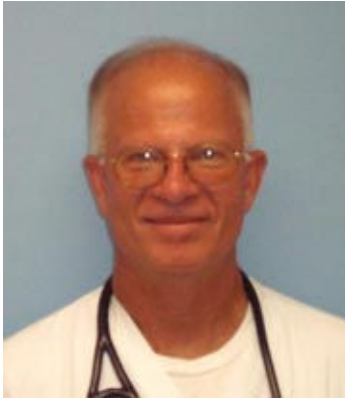
Gary George, RN, Hospice



“Nursing is a privilege. What other professional is welcomed at the birth of a baby, utilizes intricate technology to stabilize a young man in the critical care unit, manages multi-million dollar budgets and patient care units, holds the hand of the great-grandmother as she dies peacefully of pancreatic cancer and comforts the woman’s grieving family? Yes, nursing is a privilege, but it is also a calling.”

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT – Today, we find nurses in myriads of positions, from bedside nurses to hospital administrators to government officials to nursing faculty to military officers to emergency room managers. Almost anything that you can dream can come true.

Ben Andrick, RN



“Nursing is a very cool field to go into with great opportunities and a lot of room for advancement. My advice is to ignore the male stereotypes as they are diminishing. Patients have expressed to me their joy in having a male nurse.”

VARIETY OF CAREER DIRECTIONS AVAILABLE – Once a nurse completes his baccalaureate degree, there are a multitude of career directions available. With a Master’s degree: clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, or nurse anesthetist. With a doctoral degree: education, research programs, and creative roles in medical centers. Others have developed roles working with children and the elderly, in their own businesses, or in government.

Chuck Frisch, CRNA

“Don’t be scared of the stereotypes. You are a respected part of the health care team. The nursing staff appreciates the difference of a male RN. The nursing shortage now and in the future gives you an unlimited amount of job prospects. You will always have a career, which also has excellent salaries.”



GOOD SALARIES, PARTICULARLY COMPARED TO THOSE WITH SIMILAR DEGREES – Entry-level salaries compare quite favorably with teachers and other college liberal arts graduates. Increases in salary are typically regular with good performance and are even better with outstanding performance and promotion. Larger employers add to salary with tuition assistance and good benefits.

David Sanders, LPN

“Being an LPN at this time is the best thing for me. There are more men in nursing today than ever before. I chose nursing to make a difference in the lives of the people I care for.”



OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND WORLD – Nurses work everywhere. And in today’s competitive hiring environment, nurses work for good salaries in the place they want with the population they prefer and for long or short periods of time.

Mike Romano, RN, Graduate Student



“When I leave work, I feel much different than I ever did on any other job. The real meaning of making a connection with someone can’t be accurately described, but it is the most fulfilling, satisfying experience in the world. To leave work every day knowing you made a difference in people’s lives is incredible.”

OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD – Nurses provide leadership opportunities at all levels, from directing a small team of assistants on a hospital unit to leading an entire hospital nursing group. And in today’s world, nurses have unlimited opportunities to develop and fill positions of leadership.

Ron Brown, RN

“Becoming a male nurse has become more acceptable to society. If you’re not sure on the field, try to become an LPN first and then you can work as an LPN while you’re attending school to become an RN. There are unlimited work opportunities. You can travel anywhere in the world and always find a job. It is very rewarding to take care of patients. There are also approximately 77 million baby boomers and only 44 million generation Xers to take care of those 77 million in the coming future. There are many areas that you can specialize in, so you don’t have to dedicate your career to just one area.”



TOUGH QUESTIONS

Are men really encouraged to become nurses?

Absolutely. Today, only 5-10% of nurses are men. But it wasn't always that way, and the profession is currently seeking a gender mix that reflects the population. During the 20th Century, conditions of the profession were more attractive to women than to men, and some circumstances actually diminished the male nurse in relation to his female counterpart. During World War II, women nurses were commissioned and men were not. That is no longer the case.

Do male nurses take care of only male patients?

There is a myth that only a female nurse should care for a female patient. Yet, society does not apply that rule to physicians, and female nurses care for male patients. Any nurse who acts as a true professional is able to care for any patient in any setting. It is the attitude that is most important, not the gender.

Garner Anderson, RN



“Having nurses of both genders is necessary to offer patients diversity. Nurses need to be represented across a broad spectrum, just as their patients are. People have varying communication styles and they need to have the option to speak to someone they feel comfortable with. I approach a patient as an individual, but also as a man, and I might be able to solicit unique information from them because of that.”

What about the stereotypes of male nurses? Stereotypes exist about male nurses: that they are all

gay, or not smart enough to get into medical school. While there are gay nurses, that is by no means true of all male nurses. And male nurses are, indeed, smart enough to be anything they want to be. Nursing school is demanding and nursing has a unique body of knowledge that overlaps little with medical school. The more typical stereotype of male nurses, which is held by nurses in general, is that they are very special and caring individuals who bring their own strength to nursing.

Larry Steele, RN



“With nursing as your career you will have a promising future. There is a high demand for nurses right now and there are a lot of jobs to choose from, which gives you a lot of flexibility. There are a ton of different specialties in the RN field and in society today the stereotype for male nurses is going away.”

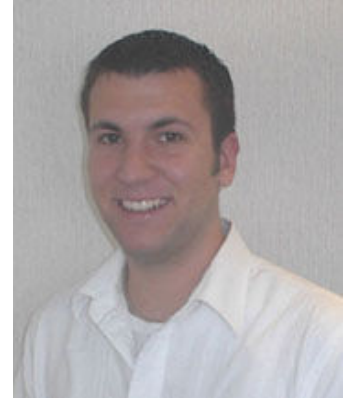
As a nurse, can I expect to earn enough to support a family?

Yes, you can. There are a wide variety of income levels for nurses. As a new graduate, you will earn up to \$30,000, and those salary levels increase annually. You can add to your income with shift differentials if your employer provides that – a differential is an addition to hourly wage for difficult-to-fill time shifts. Salaries are high in some remote areas. You can further increase your income with promotions, job changes, and further education.

Will I have to work weekends and nights? Probably you will be required to work weekends and

nights. It depends on the type of nursing and the facility you choose. Nurses provide care 24/7, whether in a hospital, care center, or clinic on-call function. Many nurses view nights and weekends as added flexibility in scheduling. In a two-income household, parents can avoid some child-care costs by working different shifts. Working weekends, evenings, or nights makes it easier to continue in school during the week.

Vincent Morris, Nursing Student



“When I was in high school and looking toward college, I knew that I wanted to do something in health care. Everyone encouraged me to be a doctor and so I shadowed every kind of doctor. What I realized during my shadowing was that the work the nurses did appealed to me much more than what the doctor did. Nurses provide hands-on day-to-day care for the patients, which is what I want to do. I wish someone had suggested nursing to me from the beginning.”

Are there nursing jobs in rural communities?

Yes, there are. And these positions vary somewhat from those found in more urban areas. They often allow the nurse to use a broader range of knowledge since care is less specialized in rural hospitals and clinics. And nurses receive a unique respect in rural areas. Often, we think of nurses coming from and returning to rural areas to practice nursing. Some nurses from urban areas have chosen to move to rural areas to practice and enjoy the variety of

practice as well as the rural community to raise a family.

Will I have to take orders from physicians? In some settings, physicians write orders and nurses carry them out. In other work places, that is not the case. Nursing and medicine are two separate professions with two different but overlapping bodies of knowledge. In health care, there are many professions, each with their own expert knowledge. Each of the professions is increasingly independent in their judgments and

care. It is essential to quality patient care that each professional acknowledges and respects the expertise of all of the others.

Do male nurses get all the heavy jobs and the hard work? Nursing is a “thinking and teaching” profession, and nurses must be able to provide that expertise. There is, however, hard work required. In some settings, males may be called on to assist with lifting. It is the responsibility of all professionals to assure that everyone has knowledge

and equipment sufficient for the heavy and hard work.

Will I have any advantages as a male in nursing? That is a tough question. The answers are based on yesterday’s stereotypes. Insofar as male nurses work hard, make a commitment to their careers, and demonstrate competence in nursing, a male nurse has that advantage. However, female nurses who demonstrate the same characteristics will have the same advantage.

HOW TO GET INTO NURSING

High school courses to take:

English – at least 2 semesters
Mathematics, including Algebra II
Sciences, including Biology and Chemistry

Choose the type of licensure preferred:

A licensed practical nurse (LPN) usually has one year of education, can work in most health care settings, and works under the supervision of a registered professional nurse. All states license the LPN following successful passing of the national licensure examination, the NCLEX-PN®.

A registered professional nurse (RN) has 2-4 years of education, can work in all health care settings and schools and industry, and works independently. The RN has a diploma or an Associate’s degree or Bachelor’s degree. All states license the RN following successfully passing the national licensure examination, the NCLEX-RN®.

Choose your ultimate objective in nursing

It is helpful, but not necessary to know your ultimate goal when you begin your nursing education. As you meet nurses and get experience, both as a student and as a graduate nurse, you will come to know about more opportunities for nurses.

If your ultimate goal is the LPN or RN, choose an educational program that prepares you for that goal. If your ultimate goal extends beyond the initial LPN or RN, it is important to know that: 1) programs for a second nursing education will apply credit from previous education toward the current degree but some credit may be lost or have to be proven; and 2) advanced practice roles require a Master’s degree.

The following levels of education are available to you:

1. Licensed practical nurse
2. Registered professional nurse
3. Master’s degree/clinical nurse specialist
4. Master’s degree/nurse practitioner
5. Master’s degree/nurse anesthetist
6. Other Master’s degree
7. Doctoral degree/clinical
8. Doctoral degree/education

Consider the education and experience you already have

Are you an EMT? Do you have a Bachelor’s degree in another field? Do you have life experience that will allow you to challenge for credit of any of your core college courses, e.g., a writing workshop, research experience?

Contact schools of nursing as early as possible

This will assist you to plan your pre-nursing courses and obtain financial assistance if you need it. At some programs, there is a waiting list. Following is a listing of schools of nursing in Nebraska. For a Web listing, go to <http://www.center4nursing.org/education3.htm>.

To earn the LPN diploma:

Central Community College, 3134 W. Hwy 34, P.O. Box 4903, Grand Island, NE 68803-4903, 1-800-652-9177, www.cccneb.edu

Clarkson College, 101 S. 42nd St., Omaha, NE 68131-2739, 1-800-647-5500, www.clarksoncollege.edu

Metropolitan Community College, P.O. Box 3777, Omaha, NE 68103-0777, 1-800-228-9553, www.mccneb.edu

Mid Plains Community College, 1101 Halligan Dr., North Platte, NE 69101, 1-800-658-4308, www.mpcca.cc.ne.us

Nebraska College of Business, 3350 N. 90th St., Omaha, NE 68134, 1-800-642-1456, www.ncbedu.com

Northeast Community College, 801 E. Benjamin Ave., P.O. Box 469, Norfolk, NE 68702-0469, 1-402-844-7330, www.northeastcollege.com

Southeast Community College, 8800 O St., Lincoln, NE 68520-1299, 1-800-642-4075, www.southeast.edu

Southeast Community College, 4771 W. Scott Rd., Beatrice, NE 68310-7042, 1-800-233-5027, www.southeast.edu

Western Nebraska Community College, 1601 E. 27th St., Scottsbluff, NE 69361-1899, 1-800-348-4435, www.wncc.net

To earn the RN diploma:

BryanLGH College of Health Sciences, 1600 S. 48th St., Lincoln, NE 68506-1299, 1-402-481-3867, www.bryanlghcollege.org

To earn the Associate's degree:

Central Community College, 3134 W. Hwy 34, P.O. Box 4903, Grand Island, NE 68803-4903, 1-800-652-9177, www.cccneb.edu

College of Saint Mary, 1901 S. 72nd St., Omaha, NE 68124, 1-800-926-5534, www.csm.edu

Metropolitan Community College, P.O. Box 3777, Omaha, NE 68103-0777, 1-800-228-9553, www.mccneb.edu

Mid Plains Community College, 1101 Halligan Dr., North Platte, NE 69101, 1-800-658-4308, www.mpcca.cc.ne.us

Northeast Community College, 801 E. Benjamin Ave., P.O. Box 469, Norfolk, NE 68702-0469, 1-402-844-7330, www.northeastcollege.com

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To earn the Bachelor's degree:

BryanLGH College of Health Sciences, 1600 S. 48th St., Lincoln, NE 68506-1299, 1-402-481-3867, www.bryanlghcollege.org

Clarkson College, 101 S. 42nd St. Omaha, NE 68131-2739 1-800-647-5500, www.clarksoncollege.edu

Creighton University, 2500 California Plaza, Omaha, NE 68178, 1-402-280-2000, <http://nursing.creighton.edu>

Midland Lutheran College, 900 N. Clarkson, Fremont, NE 68025, 1-800-642-8382, www.mlc.edu

Nebraska Methodist College, 8501 W. Dodge Rd., Omaha, NE 68114-3426, 1-800-335-5510, www.methodistcollege.edu

Union College, 3800 S. 48th St., Lincoln, NE 68506, 1-402-488-2331 Ext. 2347, www.ucollege.edu

University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing, 985330 Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE 68198-5330, 1-800-626-8431, www.unmc.edu

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