



Melissa Diebel, RN, BSN

Why did you choose public health nursing?

My initial reason for public health nursing was to change career paths from Hemodialysis to Public Health School Nurse.

Please provide a brief description of what you do.

I am a PHN III (senior PHN) in the Community Nursing Services providing an evidence-base nurturing parenting program (NPP) to families at risk for child abuse and neglect. This curriculum is delivered once a week at home visits for one and a half - two hours each week for sixteen weeks for high risk families.

Please describe your role in the health care community where you practice nursing.

As a PHN, I work with a variety of culture throughout the office and community. This position is different than a hospital setting. Most of my time is going from home to home working with families in their own environment providing NPP curriculum and resources as needed.

What do you consider to be the most challenging part of public health nursing?

The most challenging aspect is transportation for many of my clients and the lack of programs to assist them with untreated mental health disorders. Usually,

the individual needs to see a family physician prior to seeking a form of counseling. If a program was offered to untreated mental health individuals which provided identified assistance; this would prevent rather than create the need to treat the individual in need, benefiting both the community and the organization. I feel something like this could introduce positive change in their lives.

What do you consider to be the most rewarding?

The most rewarding part in public health is practicing prevention for services rendered. With this exposure PHN's are promoting a positive environment for healthy lifestyles and improving a better way of life to clients in the community.

What advice do you have for nursing graduates who are considering public health nursing as a career?

to nursing graduates who are seeking an opportunity to maintain, promote, and protect the individual, families, community, and population. Public Health Nursing may just be for you. There are a number of services in which a PHN could pursue a career in public health such as Children Special Health Care Services (CSHCS), Clinic Nurse, Communicable Disease, Tuberculosis (TB), HIV/AIDS, Immunization Action Plan (IAP), Early On Services, Fetal and Infant Mortality, Homeless Advocate, Substance Abuse – Prior Authorization and Central Evaluation (PACE), Nurturing Parenting, Nurse on Call, and Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), as well as Senior Services.

Using the Public Health Model of Care have a primary focus to maintain, promote, and protect public health. This framework is the structure of the PHN services today and in the future. Public Health Nursing supports: Individual Health, Family Health, and Community Health. Reference - Kuss, T., Proulx-Girouard, L., Lovitt, S., Katz, C., and Kennelly, P., (1997), A Public Health Nursing Model: Public Health Nursing 14(2), 81-91. "Florence Nightingale recognized that only with knowledge and skill could she help improve public health. Florence Nightingale still serves as a role model for nurses today. With vision, values and voice, nurses care for all people, leading societies around the world toward better health". Retrieved from: <http://www.fnif.org/nightingale.htm>