

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

FOR PALLIATIVE CARE NURSES

IN KENYA



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NURSING COUNCIL OF KENYA- VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES



Our Vision

A world-class regulatory body in nursing and midwifery education, and practice



Our Mission

Develop standards, enforce regulations in nursing and midwifery education, and practice



Our Values

Our core values express that everything we do comes from deeply-held commitments and shared understanding of our values, what we stand for, how we treat each other and those we serve; that inform every policy and steer every action summarized as:

I – Integrity: We are committed to acting in an honest, accountable and transparent manner in all our undertakings

N – Nurture: We value and nurture the strength of character it takes to work together as a team, to be an individual, to respect differences of opinions, and have the ability to empathize with others.

S – Social responsibility: Caring for the patient, family, community and the environment

P – Professionalism: We are dedicated to the highest levels of achievement obtainable through competencies and critical skills.

I – Innovation: We thrive on creativity and ingenuity. We seek the innovations that are evidence-based and data-driven to bring a positive change to the Council.

R – Responsiveness: We act with a sense of urgency, make qualified decisions in time and provide fiscally responsible solutions.

E – Excellence: We pledge the highest levels of effectiveness and efficiency

FOREWORD

The Nursing Council of Kenya is a regulatory body established by an Act of Parliament, the Nurses and midwives Act, cap 257 of the laws of Kenya, whose mandate is to make provision for nursing education and practice. The Council endeavors in its corporate responsibility to be a world-class regulator, providing best practice to be emulated by the region and beyond. Similarly, the mission of the Council is to ensure the provision of quality nurses training and maintenance of professional nursing practice through research and appropriate regulations. In order to fulfill its mission and vision and, to realize its core regulatory mandate, the council prescribes regulatory tools to guide the nursing practice.

The scope of practice defines the limits of care and legal boundaries of the nursing practice. It spells out what the nurse can be held accountable for in the course of practice. This document is the first and its development has been influenced by several changes taking place in the country, health sector in general and nursing in particular.

These changes have been occasioned by global and national policy imperatives to include; The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, vision 2030, UHC, devolution, the Kenya palliative care policy 2021-2030, among others. It is important to note that the Constitution has several articles that bear implications on the health sector with regard to access, quality of care and on the rights of clients and/or patients. Additionally, the enactment of the Nurses (Amendment) Act, 2011 calls for the expanded role of the nurse. This essentially means that the nurses' mandate has expanded to include provision of Palliative care considering that Kenya faces a rising burden of Non-Communicable diseases in addition to the infectious diseases burden and emerging pandemics such as COVID-19 and these diseases will often require palliative care. The nurse hence must be equipped to address the serious health related suffering (SHRS) as a result of the burden outlined above.

This document elaborates on the scopes for all levels of Palliative care nurses in the country and can be applied in all health settings. We believe that this document will be of great benefit to all the users in all palliative care settings.

Prof. Eunice Ndirangu- Mugo

CHAIRPERSON

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Special gratitude and sincere appreciation to the following institutions who actively participated in the development of this document to include;

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- Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
- Kenya Medical Training College – Nairobi Campus
- Kenyatta National Hospital
- Kenyatta National Hospital – School of Nursing
- Machakos County Referral Hospital
- Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital – College of Health Sciences
- Nairobi Hospice
- The Cicely McDonell College of Health Sciences – The Nairobi Hospital
- Kenya Hospices and Palliative Care Association (KEHPCA)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DSE:	Discipline, Standards and Ethics
JKUAT	Jomo Kenyatta university of Agriculture and Technology
KMTC	Kenya Medical Training College.
MOH	Ministry of Health
MScN	Master of Science in Nursing
MTRH	Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital
NCK	Nursing Council of Kenya
PCU	Palliative Care unit
PC	Palliative care
PLWPCN	Persons living with Palliative care Needs
SHRS	Serious Health Related Suffering
UHC	Universal Health Coverage

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Nursing council of Kenya recognizes the central role of the Palliative care nurse in the improvement of the quality of life for patients with palliative care needs and their families. This care is provided by multidisciplinary teams.

In the past, nursing education has not fully prepared nurses with adequate knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to provide palliative care. The art and science of palliative care nursing specialty has evolved over time to embrace evidence-based practice, holistic care and enhanced advocacy. Palliative care improves the quality of life of patients faced by life threatening illnesses and their families.

The development of the scope of practice for palliative care was occasioned by a felt need to guide the practice of palliative care nursing in order to improve the standards of care. This scope is informed by curriculum innovations, clinical practice guidelines, advanced nursing practices and research in palliative care nursing.

To this end, it places emphasis on the need to maintain high standards of practice as well as the use of evidence to continuously improve practice. The Palliative care nurse is specially trained and qualified to take on professional responsibility and provide care to the patients with palliative care needs across the continuum of health and illness. They are able to recognize and provide holistic support persons (Adults and children) living with palliative care needs

(PLWPCN) and their families. In addition to being members of the multidisciplinary health care team, the palliative care Nurse Works in collaboration with other agencies in providing holistic care.

This Scope of Practice document describes the range of interests, capabilities and professional activities of Palliative care nurses in Kenya. It considers nurses as independent practitioners and provides examples of settings in which they are engaged. It is not intended to exclude the participation in other nursing activities as stipulated in the registered nurse scope of practice. The overriding principle is that members of the nursing profession will provide only those services for which they are adequately prepared through their academic and clinical training and experience. Their practice should be consistent with the Code of Ethics and Conduct for Nurses.

The purpose of this document is therefore to stipulate the scope within which the Palliative care nurse should operate. It outlines those activities that are within the expertise of Palliative care nurses and serves as a reference for service delivery and education.

SECTION 2.0: SPECIFIC SCOPES OF PRACTICE

All Palliative care nurses are legally, ethically, and morally responsible for practicing in accordance with recognized standards of professional nursing practice, professional performance, the recognized professional code of ethics and specialty certification. Professional responsibility is achieved through the individual Palliative care nurse's assumption of personal accountability for continuing education and professional experience over and above the basic requirements for professional palliative nursing.

2.1 HIGHER DIPLOMA IN PALLIATIVE CARE NURSING

The nurse has a higher diploma in Palliative Care nursing and has acquired competencies to work at both operational and management level in the health care system.

In addition to the registered nurse competencies, the Palliative Care nurse at this level will:

1. Perform comprehensive systemic health assessment on a patient with palliative care needs, recognize deviations and intervene appropriately.
2. Order, perform and interpret selected laboratory and diagnostic findings to make clinical decisions/ judgment in patient care according to relevant protocols and guidelines. Refer Appendix 3.
3. Prescribe and perform selected medical surgical procedures as stipulated in appendix 2.
4. Advocate for access to quality palliative care services.
5. Perform comprehensive assessment of pain and other symptoms and intervene as appropriate.
6. Perform advanced emergency care to palliative care patients in line with stipulated guidelines.
7. Prescribe Palliative care medicines and administer any other prescribed medication to clients /patients as per the guidelines.
8. Perform pre and post-operative care of patients undergoing surgical interventions in palliative care settings.
9. Perform skin and wound care procedures.
10. Participate in development & implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to palliative care services.
11. Provide clinical mentorship to multidisciplinary team members in palliative care settings.
12. Evaluate potential risks of developing palliative care emergencies and mitigate the risk as well as educate patient, families and communities.
13. Work in Collaboration with other team members to provide nutritional support to patients with Palliative Care needs.

14. Assess and facilitate rehabilitation of palliative care patients in collaboration with relevant health team members.
15. Participate and utilize research findings to promote quality palliative care services
16. Manage palliative care at the hospital ward/unit level.
17. Provide psychosocial support to individuals, family and community.
18. Support patient and the family in making medically important decisions.
19. Provide home based care and outreach services to palliative care patients.
20. Monitor and follow up on care provided to palliative care patients.

2.2 POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PALLIATIVE CARE NURSING

The nurse qualified at post-graduate diploma level has undergone specialty training in Palliative care nursing after undergraduate studies.

In addition to the registered nurse competencies, the Palliative Care nurse at this level will:

1. Perform comprehensive systemic health assessment on a patient with palliative care needs, recognize deviations and intervene appropriately.
2. Order, perform and interpret selected laboratory and diagnostic findings to make clinical decisions/ judgment in patient care according to relevant protocols and guidelines. Refer Appendix.
3. Prescribe and perform selected medical surgical procedures as stipulated in appendix 2.
4. Perform comprehensive assessment of pain and other symptoms and intervene as appropriate.
5. Perform advanced emergency care to palliative care patients in line with stipulated guidelines.
6. Prescribe Palliative care medicines and administer any other prescribed medication to clients /patients as per the guidelines.
7. Perform pre and post-operative care of patients undergoing surgical interventions in palliative care settings.
8. Perform skin and wound care procedures.
9. Initiate and participate in development & implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to palliative care services.
10. Advocate for integration of palliative care services in all levels of care.
11. Advocate for access to quality palliative care services.
12. Provide clinical mentorship to multidisciplinary team members in palliative care settings.
13. Evaluate potential risks of developing palliative care emergencies and mitigate the risk as well as educate patient, families and communities.
14. Work in Collaboration with other team members to provide nutritional support to patients with Palliative Care needs.

15. Assess and facilitate rehabilitation of palliative care patients in collaboration with relevant health team members.
16. Initiate and participate in the establishment of palliative care outlets.
17. Provide psychosocial support to individuals, family and community.
18. Manage health programs in Palliative Care specialty.
19. Manage palliative care services and facilities as well as training institutions.
20. Monitor and follow up on care provided to palliative patient
21. Conduct and utilize research findings to promote quality care in palliative care services.
22. Implement curriculum related to palliative care nursing for diploma and higher diploma levels.

2.3 MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING- PALLIATIVE CARE

A Palliative care nurse qualified at master's level has undergone specialty training in Palliative care nursing after undergraduate studies. The palliative nurse at this level will;

1. Perform comprehensive systemic health assessment on a patient with palliative care needs, recognize deviations and intervene appropriately.
2. Order, perform and interpret selected laboratory and diagnostic findings to make sound clinical decisions/ judgment in patient care according to relevant protocols and guidelines. Refer Appendix 3
3. Prescribe and perform selected medical surgical procedures as stipulated in appendix 2.
4. Advocate for pain free initiative for all patients with palliative care needs
5. Perform comprehensive assessment of pain and other symptoms and intervene as appropriate
6. Perform advanced emergency care to palliative care patients in line with stipulated guidelines
7. Prescribe Palliative care medicines and administer any other prescribed medication to clients /patients as per the guidelines.
8. Perform pre and post-operative care of patients undergoing surgical interventions in palliative care settings
9. Perform skin and wound care procedures
10. Initiate and participate in development & implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to palliative care services.
11. Advocate for integration of palliative care services in all levels of care.
12. Advocate for the provision of palliative care services to clients from the time of diagnosis
13. Advocate for integration of palliative care nursing content in all nursing training programs.

14. Provide clinical mentorship to multidisciplinary team members across health care settings.
15. Evaluate potential risks of developing palliative care emergencies and mitigate the risk as well as educate patient, families and communities.
16. Work in Collaboration with other team members to provide nutritional support to patients with PC needs
17. Initiate and participate in the establishment of palliative care outlets.
18. Manage health programs in Palliative Care specialty.
19. Provide consultancy services in matters relating to palliative care.
20. Initiate and participate in development & implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to palliative care services.
21. Provide expert advice on palliative care
22. Assess, Initiate and facilitate rehabilitation of palliative care patients in collaboration with relevant health team members.
23. Monitor and follow up on care provided to palliative patients
24. Provide psychosocial support to individuals, family and community
25. Design implement and evaluate curriculum related to palliative care nursing for graduates and post graduate diploma students
26. Initiate, conduct, utilize and disseminate research findings in health care

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: MEDICINES LIST SCHEDULING CONSIDERATIONS

The Palliative care nurse shall be guided by the following:

1. Work to the extent of training and certification, i.e. higher diploma, post-graduate diploma and masters
2. Power to prescribe opioid medications with Physician oversight.
3. The nurse will have power/ Full practice autonomy to prescribe non-opioid analgesics and drugs to manage other distressing symptoms as well as apply non-pharmacological interventions

APPENDIX 2: SPECIALIZED PROCEDURES SCHEDULE

This schedule outlines the common medical-surgical procedures performed by the palliative care nurse and shall be reviewed and updated from time to time as necessary

PROCEDURES	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTERS
ROUTINE procedures			
Administer pharmacological and non - pharmacological interventions in management of pain and other distressing symptoms			
1. Oxygen therapy			
2. Care of invasive devices			
4. Perform tracheal suction and tracheostomy care			
5. Perform endotracheal ex-tubation as prescribed			
7. Perform the following special procedures:			
a. Wound care.			
b. Stoma care			
c. Orifice irrigation	G	G	G
8. Management of palliative care emergencies			
9. Counsel patients, family and significant others			
10. Prepare patients with palliative care needs who require admission			
11. Perform discharge planning for admitted Patients			
14. Calculate caloric requirements for individual patients	C	C	C
20. Meet nutritional requirements via:			
a. NGT feeding			
b. Parenteral			
c. PEG (Percutaneous Endoscopic gastrostomy) tube			
23. Provide infusion therapy			
22. Monitor patients in critical conditions			
26. Provide end of life care to patients and families			
27. Provide loss, grief and bereavement support to patients and families			

Key:			
Perform unassisted			
Perform with assistance			
c	In consultation		

APPENDIX 3: LABORATORY INVESTIGATIONS AND RADIOLOGICAL TESTS SCHEDULE

INVESTIGATIONS	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTERS
ROUTINE TESTS			
Complete blood count (CBC)			
Blood sugar (RBS/FBS)			
Urea/Electrolyte/Creatinine (U/E/C)	C	C	
BASED ON PATIENT NEEDS			
Coagulation profile (APTT, PTI)	C	C	
INR	C	C	C
Liver function tests (LFTs)	C	C	C
Bilirubin Levels	C	C	C
Cultures (Blood, Urine, tracheal aspirate, catheter tip, pus swab)	C		
C-Reactive protein (CRP)	C	C	C
CSF studies	C	C	C
Spirometry testing			
Urinalysis (Dip stick)			
Pregnancy test			
Hepatitis	C	C	C
Thyroid function test	C	C	C
HB 1c			
RADIOLOGICAL TESTS			
X-ray	C	C	C
Echocardiogram	A C	A C	A C
Doppler/ Ultrasound	A C	A C	A C
Key:			
Order, Perform, interpret and utilize			
Order, interpret and utilize			
Interpret and utilize			
A	With Additional Training can perform		
C	In consultation		

APPENDIX 4: COMPARATIVE TABLE FOR THE DIFFERENT LEVELS

Higher diploma	Post graduate diploma	Master's
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perform comprehensive systemic health assessment on a patient with palliative care needs, recognize deviations and intervene appropriately. 2. Order, perform and interpret selected laboratory and diagnostic findings to make clinical decisions/ judgment in patient care according to relevant protocols and guidelines. Refer Appendix 3 3. Prescribe and perform selected medical surgical procedures as stipulated in appendix 2. 4. Advocate for access to quality palliative care services 5. Perform comprehensive assessment of pain and other symptoms and intervene as appropriate 6. Perform advanced emergency care to palliative care patients in line with stipulated guidelines 	<p>In addition to the scope of practice to the Higher Diploma in palliative care nursing, the post graduate diploma nurse will;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiate and participate in development & implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to palliative care services. 2. Advocate for integration of palliative care services in all levels of care. 3. Advocate for access to quality palliative care services 4. Work in Collaboration with other team members to provide nutritional support to patients with Palliative Care needs 5. Initiate and participate in the establishment of palliative care outlets. 6. Manage health programs in Palliative Care specialty. 	<p>NB; In addition to the scope of practice to the post graduate diploma nurse in palliative care nursing, the Master's level nurse will;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiate and participate in development & implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to palliative care services. 2. Initiate and participate in the establishment of palliative care outlets. 3. Manage health programs in Palliative Care specialty. 4. Provide consultancy services in matters relating to palliative care. 5. Initiate and participate in development & implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to palliative care services.

<p>7. Prescribe Palliative care medicines and administer any other prescribed medication to clients /patients as per the guidelines.</p> <p>8. Perform pre and post-operative care of patients undergoing surgical interventions in palliative care settings</p> <p>9. Perform skin and wound care procedures</p> <p>10. Participate in development & implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to palliative care services.</p> <p>11. Provide clinical mentorship to multidisciplinary team members in palliative care settings.</p> <p>12. Evaluate potential risks of developing palliative care emergencies and mitigate the risk as well as educate</p>	<p>7. Manage palliative care services and facilities as well as training institutions</p> <p>8. Conduct and utilize research findings to promote quality care in palliative care services</p> <p>9. Implement curriculum related to palliative care nursing for diploma and higher diploma levels.</p>	<p>6. Provide expert advice on palliative care</p> <p>7. Assess, Initiate and facilitate rehabilitation of palliative care patients in collaboration with relevant health team members.</p> <p>8. Provide psychosocial support to individuals, family and community</p> <p>9. Design implement and evaluate curriculum related to palliative care nursing for graduates and post graduate diploma students</p> <p>10. Initiate, conduct, utilize and disseminate research findings in health care</p>
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<p>patient, families and communities.</p> <p>13. Work in Collaboration with other team members to provide nutritional support to patients with PC needs</p> <p>14. Assess and facilitate rehabilitation of palliative care patients in collaboration with relevant health team members.</p> <p>15. Participate and utilize research findings to promote quality palliative care services</p> <p>16. Manage palliative care at the hospital ward/unit level</p> <p>17. Provide psychosocial support to individuals, family and community.</p> <p>18. Support patient and the family in making medically important decisions</p> <p>19. Provide home based care and outreach services to palliative care patients</p> <p>20. Monitor and follow up on care provided to palliative care patients</p>		
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accountable: Being answerable for one's actions, decisions and advice legally or professionally.

Advocacy Role: A role in which the palliative care nurse/midwife acts on behalf of clients to help them gain greater independence or self-determination and to make the system more responsive and relevant to their needs and the needs of nurses and other health care providers.

Assessment: The organized, systematic and continuous process of observations and measurements of nursing care. Assessment includes the use of interviewing, physical examination and carrying out investigations.

Competencies: Basic knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required to safely perform the prescribed role.

Collaboration: The action of work with someone to produce something.

Networking: Reaching out to build alliances with organizations and persons with common interests.

Palliative care Nurses: These nurses have undergone further training in Palliative nursing after their initial qualification as a nurse. They acquire Palliative care competencies to work at both operational and management level in palliative care field.

Practice: Nursing care. Includes direct care, client education, counselling, and all activities defined in the Nursing Scope of Practice.

Rehabilitation: The process of enabling a sick individual to return to the highest possible level of functioning.

Palliate: To make (a disease or its symptoms) less severe without removing the cause

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