

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

FOR CRITICAL CARE NURSES IN KENYA



MAY 2022

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The Registrar,
Nursing council of Kenya,
P.O Box 20056-00200,
Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 3873556/3873585
Fax: 3873585
Cell: +254721920567/+254733924669
Email – info@nckkenya.org
Website: www.nckkenya.com

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 CAP 257 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 the vision and mission, to realize its core mandate, the Council develops and reviews regulatory tools like the scope of practice to provide a practice framework that is in tandem with current needs, demands and context of the health care system.

This document was developed through a consultative process by key stakeholders from various health institutions. It refers to various documents which include Nurses Act Cap 257, NCK Strategic plan 2017-2022, Scope of practice for Nurses and Midwives in Kenya- Entry level 4th edition and curriculum for critical care nursing among others

This scope of practice defines the limits of care and legal boundaries of the critical care nursing practice. It spells out what the critical care 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.

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

Prof Eunice Ndirangu- Mugo

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1. Amref International University
2. Catherine Mc'Auley Nursing School- The Mater Hospital
3. Cecil McDonell- The Nairobi Hospital College of Health Sciences
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5. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
6. Kenya Progressive Nurses Association
7. Kenyatta National Hospital
8. Kenyatta University
9. Kenyatta University Teaching Research and Referral Hospital
10. Kisii Univeristy
11. Midwives Association of Kenya
12. Nairobi University
13. National Nurses Association of Kenya
14. The Mater Misericordiae Hospital
15. The Nairobi Women's Hospital College
16. Uasin Gishu County

Edna C. Tallam- Kimaiyo
REGISTRAR/CEO

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INTRODUCTION

Critical Care Nursing units are areas where patients with life threatening or potential for life threatening conditions are admitted. Critical care nursing is a specialty that deals with human responses to life threatening health problems calling for highly complex decision making, critical thinking and efficient collaboration with the multidisciplinary team. The critical care nurse gives optimum care to patients and their families, and has competencies in recognition and timely intervention on both potential and life-threatening conditions.

This Scope of Practice document describes the range of interests, capabilities and professional activities of critical care nurses in Kenya. It considers nurses not only as independent practitioners but also as members of the multidisciplinary health care team and provides examples of settings in which they are engaged. It is not intended to exclude the participation in other nursing interventions as stipulated in the Scope of Practice for Nurses and Midwives in Kenya. 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 shall 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 critical care nurse should operate. It outlines those competencies that are within the expertise of critical care nurses. It serves as a reference for issues of service delivery, healthcare consumers, education, research, nursing regulatory activities and inter-professional relations.

SECTION I: LEVELS OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR CRITICAL CARE NURSES

The following are the levels of qualifications for critical care nurses in Kenya.

1. Higher diploma in critical care nursing
2. Post graduate diploma in critical care nursing
3. Masters of Science in Nursing- Critical Nursing care

SECTION II: SPECIFIC SCOPES OF PRACTICE FOR CRITICAL CARE NURSE

2.1 SECTION INTRODUCTION

A competency is Basic knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required to safely perform the prescribed role. Critical Care nurses are legally, ethically, and morally responsible for practicing in accordance with established and recognized legal framework. Professional responsibility is achieved through personal accountability for continuing education and professional experience, over and above the basic requirements for professional critical care nursing.

2.2 HIGHER DIPLOMA IN CRITICAL CARE NURSING

This nurse has undergone further training in critical care nursing after their initial qualification as a general nurse. They acquire critical care competencies to work at both operational and management levels in critical care nursing. In addition to the scope of a general registered nurse, these nurses have competencies that are in line with the field of critical care specialization.

The Nurse with a higher diploma in critical care nursing will: -

1. Perform comprehensive systemic health assessment on a critically ill patient, 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 in appendix I
3. Prescribe and perform selected medical surgical procedures as stipulated in appendix III.
4. Perform advanced emergency care to critically ill patients in line with stipulated guidelines.
5. Prescribe selected drugs and administer any other prescribed medication to clients /patients as per the guidelines in appendix II.
6. Prepare patients for surgical interventions and participate in intra- and immediate post-operative care.
7. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health team in admissions, care, transfers and discharge of patients from critical care unit.
8. Participate in making ethical decisions regarding patient care outcomes.
9. Interpret and utilize cardiac markers results.
10. Interpret and utilize CSF studies.
11. Utilize echocardiogram results.
12. Utilize Doppler and ultrasound results.

13. Participate in development and implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to critical care services.
14. Utilize 4-vessel angiogram results.
15. Collaborate with multidisciplinary health team in making ethical decisions regarding care outcomes.
16. Provide guidance on design, organization and staffing of critical care units
17. Provide psychosocial support to individuals, family and community
18. Manage critical care services at ward / unit level
19. Monitor and follow up on patients receiving critical care services
20. Participate and utilize research findings in research to promote quality of care in critical care units

2.3 POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CRITICAL CARE NURSING

The nurse with a post graduate diploma has critical care competencies to work at both operational and management level in critical care nursing. The Postgraduate Diploma Critical care nurse will:

1. Perform comprehensive systemic health assessment on a critically ill patient, 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.
3. Prescribe and perform selected medical surgical procedures as stipulated in appendix III.
4. Perform advanced emergency care to critically ill patients in line with stipulated guidelines.
5. Prescribe selected drugs and administer any other prescribed medication to clients /patients as per the guidelines in appendix I.
6. Prepare patients for surgical interventions and participate in intra- and immediate post-operative care.
7. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health team in admissions, care, transfers and discharge of patients from critical care unit.
8. Participate in making ethical decisions regarding patient care outcomes.
9. Order interpret and utilize cardiac markers results
10. Order interpret and utilize CSF studies
11. Order, interpret and utilize echocardiogram results
12. Order, interpret and utilize doppler and ultrasound results

13. Prescribe and administer sedatives to critically ill patients in consultation with the relevant health care team members.
14. Insert and remove chest tube lines, arterial lines and 4-vessel angiograph in consultation with the relevant health care team members.
15. Develop and implement policies and guidelines that promote access to critical care services
16. Provide psychosocial support to individuals, family and community
17. Manage critical care services at facilities as well as training institutions
18. Implement curricula related to critical care at diploma and higher diploma level
19. Monitor and follow up on patients receiving critical care services
20. Conduct and utilize research findings in research to promote quality of care in critical care units

2.4 MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING - CRITICAL CARE NURSING (MScN-CRITICAL CARE)

A Critical Care nurse qualified at master's level has undergone specialty training in Critical Care nursing after undergraduate studies.

The MScN – Critical care will: -

1. Perform comprehensive systemic health assessment on a critically ill patient, 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 as stipulated in appendix II.
3. Prescribe and perform selected medical surgical procedures as stipulated in appendix III.
4. Perform advanced emergency care to critically ill patients in line with stipulated guidelines
5. Prescribe selected drugs and administer any other prescribed medication to clients /patients as per the guideline in appendix I
6. Prepare patients for surgical interventions and participate in intra- and immediate post-operative care.
7. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health team in admissions, care, transfers and discharge of patients from critical care unit.
8. Participate in making ethical decisions regarding patient care outcomes.
9. Order interpret and utilize cardiac markers results
10. Order interpret and utilize CSF studies

11. Order, interpret and utilize echocardiogram results
12. Order, interpret and utilize Doppler and ultrasound results
13. Prescribe and administer sedatives to critically ill patients
14. Insert and remove chest tube lines, arterial lines and 4-vessel angiograph
15. Initiate, direct and develop policies and guidelines that promote access to critical care services
16. Provide psychosocial support to individuals, family and community
17. Manage critical care services at all levels of healthcare
18. Implement curricula related to critical care at graduate and post graduate level
19. Monitor and follow up on patients receiving critical care services
20. Initiate, Conduct and utilize research findings in research to promote quality of care in critical care units

Appendix I: Drug List Scheduling Considerations

The critical care nurse shall be guided by the following: -

1. Work to the extent of training and certification, i.e. diploma, postgraduate diploma masters or PhD
2. Power to prescribe medications with different levels of Physician oversight.
 - Restricted
 - Reduced restrictions
 - Full practice autonomy
3. Individual qualification, experience and competence

The critical care nurse shall prescribe / administer drugs & vaccines in line with the competencies, job description and institutional guidelines.

The critical care nurse shall prescribe & or administer specific drugs in:

1. Consultation with the prescribing officer. The drugs shall be relevant to the ailment in question as per the pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics principles.
2. Emergency where her/his decision shall result in saving the life of the patient.
3. Situations where a nurse is licensed as a private practitioner, working in a public, family or community setting and the patient's condition warrant so.
4. Circumstances where patient is bleeding and requires urgent intervention to save life. The critical care nurse shall prescribe and administer intravenous fluids, blood and blood products to stabilize the patient.
5. Cases where a patient with mental health challenges is in danger, or endangers the lives of others.
6. A case where a prescription has been given by the relevant prescribing officer

Medications that can be prescribed and administered by a critical care nurse.

1. Anti-convulsant
2. Pain management
3. Relief of fever
4. Management of shock syndromes
5. Antidysrhythmic
6. Electrolyte imbalance
7. Fluids
8. Blood and blood products
9. Antibiotics

Appendix II: Laboratory Investigations Schedule

INVESTIGATIONS	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUAT E DIPLOMA	MASTERS
ROUTINE TESTS			
Complete blood count (CBC)			
Arterial blood gas (ABG)			
Blood sugar (RBS/FBS)			
Urea/Electrolyte/Creatinine (U/E/C)			
BASED ON PATIENT NEEDS			
Coagulation profile (APTT, PTI)			
INR	C		
ECG			
Cardiac Triage (D-Dimers, Myoglobin, Troponin, CKMB, Pro BNP)			
Liver function tests (LFTs)			
Bilirubin Levels			
Lipid profile	C		
Cultures (Blood, Urine, tracheal aspirate, catheter tip, pus swab)			
Procalcitonin			
C-Reactive protein (CRP)			
CSF studies			
Spirometry testing	C		
Urinalysis (Dip stick)			
Pregnancy test			
HIV test			
Pulmonary function test	C		
Hepatitis Antigen Tests			
Thyroid function test			
Vanillylmandelic acid (VMA)			
RADIOLOGICAL TESTS			
X-ray	C		
Echocardiogram	A	A	A
Doppler/ Ultrasound		A	A
Ct Scan/MRI/PET		C	C

INVESTIGATIONS	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUAT E DIPLOMA	MASTERS
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Key:

Order, Perform, interpret and Utilize	
Order interpret and utilize	
Interpret and utilize	
	With Additional Training can perform
C	In consultation

Appendix III: Specialized Procedures Schedule

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

PROCEDURES	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTER
ROUTINE procedures			
1. Oxygen therapy			
2. Care of invasive devices			
3. Assemble equipment and set up central venous pressure monitoring			
4. Perform tracheal suction and tracheostomy care			

PROCEDURES	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTER
5. Perform endotracheal intubation and ex-tubation			
6. Administration of inotropes, vasopressors and sedatives			
a) Inotropes			
b) Vasopressors			
c) Sedatives			
7. Analyze and interpret various ECG rhythms and intervene appropriately			
8. Perform admission procedure in CCU			
9. Prepare patients for cardiothoracic surgery;			
10. Prepare patients for Kidney transplant			

PROCEDURES	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTER
11. Prepare patients for Percutaneous Transluminal Coronary Angioplasty	C		
12. Prepare patients for Cardiac catheterization	C		
13. Prepare patients for Intra-aortic balloon pump	C		
14. Prepare patients for Pace maker insertion	C		
15. Diagnose Cardio-pulmonary arrest & carry out resuscitation effectively as a team leader/ member			
16. Perform the following special procedures:			
a) Defibrillation	C		

PROCEDURES	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTER
b) Cardioversion	C		
c) Insertion of artificial airway			
d) Assemble and set cardiac monitor			
e) Record and interpret 12- Lead ECG			
f) Set up mechanical ventilator			
g) Wean patient off ventilator	C		
h) Set and use syringe pumps			
i) Set and use infusion pumps			
j) Set and use feeding pumps			
k) Effectively nebulize a patient in ICU			
l) Spirometry	C		

PROCEDURES	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTER
m) Care of a patient with underwater seal drainage			
n) Removal of chest tubes			
o) Pulmonary capillary wedge pressure/CO monitoring, interpreting and intervening	A		
p) Pericardial tap	A		
q) Insertion of CVP lines	A		
r) Insertion Arterial lines	A		
s) Insertion of chest tube	C		
t) Insertion of vascular accesses for dialysis	C		

PROCEDURES	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTER
u) 4- vessel angiography			
17. Physiotherapy in critically ill patient			
18. Counsel patients, family and significant others			
19. Prepare patients for transfer			
a) To other wards			
b) To other hospitals			
20. Discharge Patients from CCU			
21. Perform end of life care to critically ill patients			
22. Perform last offices			

PROCEDURES	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTER
23. Initiation, care and discontinuation of dialysis (Hemodialysis, CRRT, PD)			
24. Recognition and management of complications during & after dialysis			
25. Calculate caloric requirements for individual patients in CCU	C	C	C
26. Manage patients for kidney transplant (pre and post operatively)			
27. Recognize and manage complications post kidney transplant			
28. Prepare and administer the anesthetic drugs/ equipment			

PROCEDURES	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTER
29. Provide immediate post-operative care			
30. Provide pre- and post-procedure care to patients undergoing the following procedures:			
a) Arteriogram	C		
b) Echocardiogram	C		
c) Stress test	C		
d) Percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA)	C		
31. Perform comprehensive patient assessment and document in the flow sheet.			
32. Meet nutritional requirements via:			

PROCEDURES	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTER
a) NGT feeding			
b) Parenteral	C		
c) PEG (Percutaneous Endoscopic gastrotomy) tube	A		
33. Take Care of infusion lines			
34. Glasgow coma scale scoring			
35. Intravenous Cannulation			
36. Urethral catheterization			

Key:

Perform unassisted	
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PROCEDURES		HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTER
Perform assistance	with			
A		With Additional Training can perform		
C		In consultation		

Appendix IV: Comparative Table: Critical Care Scope of Practice

Higher diploma	Post graduate diploma	Masters
1. Perform comprehensive systemic health assessment on a critically ill patient, 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 in appendix I	In addition to the scope of practice of the higher diploma in critical care post graduate will: -	In addition to the scope of practice of the post graduate diploma in critical care the masters will: -
	1. Prescribe and perform selected medical surgical procedures as stipulated in appendix III.	1. Order, perform and interpret selected laboratory and diagnostic findings to make sound clinical

<p>3. Prescribe and perform selected medical surgical procedures as stipulated in appendix III.</p> <p>4. Perform advanced emergency care to critically ill patients in line with stipulated guidelines.</p> <p>5. Prescribe selected drugs and administer any other prescribed medication to clients /patients as per the guidelines in appendix II.</p> <p>6. Prepare patients for surgical interventions and participate in intra- and immediate post-operative care.</p>	<p>2. Prescribe selected drugs and administer any other prescribed medication to clients /patients as per the guidelines in appendix I.</p> <p>3. Order, interpret and utilize Doppler and ultrasound results</p> <p>4. Prescribe and administer sedatives to critically ill patients in consultation with the relevant health care team members.</p>	<p>decisions/ judgment in patient care according to relevant protocols and guidelines as stipulated in appendix II.</p> <p>2. Prescribe and perform selected medical surgical procedures as stipulated in appendix III.</p> <p>3. Prescribe selected drugs and administer any other prescribed</p>
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<p>7. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health team in admissions, care, transfers and discharge of patients from critical care unit.</p> <p>8. Participate in making ethical decisions regarding patient care outcomes.</p> <p>9. Interpret and utilize cardiac markers results.</p> <p>10. Interpret and utilize CSF studies.</p> <p>11. Utilize echocardiogram results.</p> <p>12. Utilize doppler and ultrasound results.</p>	<p>5. Insert and remove chest tube lines, arterial lines and 4-vessel angiograph in consultation with the relevant health care team members.</p> <p>6. Develop and implement policies and guidelines that promote access to critical care services</p> <p>7. Manage critical care services at facilities as well as training institutions</p>	<p>medication to clients /patients as per the guideline in appendix I</p> <p>4. Initiate, direct and develop policies and guidelines that promote access to critical care services</p> <p>5. Manage critical care services at all levels of healthcare</p> <p>6. Implement curricula related to critical care at</p>
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<p>13. Support in development of policies and guidelines that promote access to critical care services.</p> <p>14. Utilize 4-vessel angiogram results.</p> <p>15. Collaborate with multidisciplinary health team in making ethical decisions regarding care outcomes.</p> <p>16. Provide guidance on design, organization and staffing of critical care units</p> <p>17. Provide psychosocial support to individuals, family and community</p>	<p>8. Implement curricula related to critical care at diploma and higher diploma level</p> <p>9. Conduct and utilize research findings in research to promote quality of care in critical care units</p>	<p>graduate and post graduate level</p> <p>7. Initiate, Conduct and utilize research findings in research to promote quality of care in critical care units</p>
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18. Manage critical care services at ward / unit level		
19. Monitor and follow up on patients receiving critical care services		
20. Participate and utilize research findings in research to promote quality of care in critical care units		

GLOSARY OF TERMS

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

Assessment: The organized, systematic and continuous process of observations and measurements of nursing/midwifery 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.

Critical care nurse- A nurse with advanced training to enable them provide specialized care to Patient with highly unstable and life-threatening conditions

Critical care unit- Areas/unit in the hospital where seriously ill patients receive specialized care such as intensive monitoring and advanced life support. Also referred to as Intensive care unit

Critically ill Patient- Patient with highly unstable and life-threatening conditions

Empower: Interactions with families that stimulate, promote and support family activities that foster their own strengths abilities and actions

Individual: Refers to a single client, regardless of age or health status as distinct from a family or group.

Interpret – Make appropriate clinical judgment regarding a clinical status or a test result

Invasive devices- Any medical device that is introduced in to the body either through a break in the skin or an opening in the body

Perform – Carry out an activity in the proper established manner

Scope of Critical Care Nursing Practice: The term scope of Nursing Practice defines the limits of care a critical care nurse is supposed to provide during their practice that are of concern to nurses.

Standard- is a model of established practice that is commonly accepted as correct. Standards of Practice provide a guide to the knowledge, skills, judgments, and attitudes that are needed to practice safely.

Utilize – Make clinical judgement /decisions and intervene appropriately

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 Council of Kenya

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABG	Arterial Blood Gas
ANP	Advanced Nurse Practice
APTT	Activated Partial Thromboplastin Time
CAP	Chapter
CBC	Complete Blood Count
CCANP	Critical Care Advance Nurse Practitioner
CCCNS	Critical Care Clinical Nurse Specialist
CCN	Critical Care Nurse
CCNP	Critical Care Nurse Practitioner
CCU	Critical Care Unit
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CRP	C-Reactive Protein
CRRT	Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy
CSF	Cerebrospinal Fluid
Ct Scan	Computerized Tomography Scan
CVP	Central Venous Pressure
CXR	Chest X Ray
DSE	Discipline Standards and Compliance
ECG	Electrocardiogram
ESR	Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate
FBS	Fasting Blood Sugar
FDP	Fibrin Degradation Products
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
INR	International Normalized Ratio
LFTs	Liver Function Tests
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
MScN	Masters of Science in Nursing
NCK	Nursing Council of Kenya

NGT	Nasogastric Tube Feeding
PD	Peritoneal Dialysis
PEG	Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrotomy
PET	Positron Emission Tomography
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PTCA	Percutaneous Transluminal Coronary Angioplasty
PTI	Prothrombin Time Index
RBS	Random Blood Sugar
U/E/C	Urea/Electrolyte/Creatinine
VAP	Ventilator Associated Pneumonia
VMA	Vanillylmandelic Acid

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

NAME	INSTITUTION
Prof. Eunice Ndirangu- Mugo, MSc ANP PhD (Nursing studies)	Council Chairperson
Edna Tallam – Kimaiyo - CGN, BScN, MPH	Registrar/CEO-NCK
Gladys Machira- Maripet - BScN, MScN ,PhD	Ag. Deputy Registrar – NCK
Alfred Obengo- RN	Chair, DSE committee
Margaret Muiyuro - RN MPH, RCCN	DSE Committee Member
Michael Nyongesa – BSc, HSM RN	DSE Committee Member
Dr. Joel Gondi - MBChB, MPH, EMBA	DSE Committee Member
Boniface Kimangau - RCHN, BScN	NCK Board Member
Prof. Elijah Nyangena - BScN, MScN, PhD (Med edu)	NCK Board Member
Anne Mukuna - BScN, MSc, RCCN	Nursing Council of Kenya
Maryline Chebii - KRCHN, BScN	Nursing Council of Kenya
Nargis Kaka, RN(PB) EMoNC, SMC	Nursing Council of Kenya
Felister Kamau - KRCHN, BScN	Nursing Council of Kenya

Branice Kisali - BScN, MA M&E	Nursing Council of Kenya
Priscila Najoli - KRN/M, Degree in psychology, MBA strategic management	Nursing Council of Kenya
Dr. Elijah Mwangi Githinji - RN, RCCN, BScN, MScN, PhD	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
Griffin Anasi - KRPCCN, BScM	Kenyatta University Teaching Research and Referral Hospital
Michael Mboga -RN, RCCN, HND Diagnostic U/S	Kenyatta National Hospital
Andrea Mogi - RN, BScLM, RCCN, MALS	Kenyatta National Hospital
Pamela Omengo - KRN, KRM, KRPaedN, PCCN, BScN	Gertrude's Children's Hospital Institute of Child Health
Peter Ngeny - BScN, PCCN, MSN	Cecil McDonell- The Nairobi Hospital College of Health Sciences
Teresa Omoding - BScN, MScN Critical Care	Mater Misericordiae Hospital
Stellamaris Kioo – BScN, MScN	Kisii University
Stellamaris Wambua - KRM,KRN, KRCHN,BSC oncology	Kenyatta National Hospital Training Center
Mary Muchiri - BScN	Catherine Mc'Auley Nursing School
Eunice Atsali – BScN, MSE, PHD Midwifery	Midwives Association of Kenya/Kenyatta University
George Agot - BScN, MSN Medical surgical	University of Nairobi
Loise Njeri Kimaru	Kenya Progressive Nurses Association
James Mwango Dianga - BScN	Amref International University
Felarmine Muiruri - BScN, MSN Community Health	Kenyatta University
Dennis Mbithi – BScN, MSN	National Nurses Association of Kenya
Sylvia Kimtai- KRCHN, BScN, Masters in midwifery	Uasin Gishu County
Cecilia Ojiambo – KRCHN, BScN	The Nairobi Women's Hospital College



NURSING COUNCIL OF KENYA

P.O. Box 20056-00200, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 20 387 556 /

+254 721 920 569 /

+254 733 924 669

www.nckkenya.com
