



TO: Nebraska Healthcare Facilities / Clinical Experience Partners
FROM: Nebraska Assembly of Nursing Deans and Directors (NANDD)
DATE: December 3, 2020
RE: Students caring for COVID-19 suspected and/or positive patients

Purpose: The purpose of this position statement is to allow nursing students to care for patients with COVID-19 infections.

Context: Novel coronavirus arrived to Nebraska in March and, in the reactive period, healthcare facilities and schools of nursing made the decision to restrict student experiences for those patients suspected of and diagnosed with COVID-19. Given the knowledge we now have regarding coronavirus, its transmission, and the effectiveness of personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as having a more reliable supply of PPE, it is time to prepare nursing students to care for all patients and their families. The opportunity to care for patients suspected of, and positive for COVID-19 is a vital lesson in preparing future nurses to be able to provide safe, patient-centered care, as well as understand the advocacy needs of this patient population. Given the number of suspected and diagnosed COVID-19 patients, not caring for these patients significantly reduces the clinical learning experiences available to nursing students. Nursing students may also provide additional resources to bedside care staff, while practicing within the nursing skills, knowledge, and attitudes appropriate for their current level of education.

Endorsement and Recommendation: The Assembly endorses the transition to have nursing students care for patients suspected of and positive for COVID-19. In the spirit of the long-standing esteemed relationship with our clinical practice partners, the NANDD provides the following recommendations:

- Schools of nursing and health care facilities should collaborate to provide the vital education and training needed to safely care for patients suspected of and positive for COVID-19 for clinical faculty and students.
- Healthcare facilities should provide the necessary PPE based on current Centers for Disease Control guidelines ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)) for clinical faculty and students. Schools of nursing may not have access to sufficient supplies of PPE that may be required at various healthcare facilities.
- Clinical faculty should be oriented to the current patient-care protocols in order to create appropriate patient-care assignments and ensure the continuity of care for this patient population, in collaboration with the health care facilities.
- Schools of nursing, clinical faculty, and students will continue to follow the applicable policies and procedures of the health care facilities.

In closing, the Assembly seeks to support our health care facilities, professionals, and nursing students in caring for patients with COVID-19. Educational opportunities related to infection prevention measures, safe practices, and rapidly changing healthcare landscapes will forever shape the holistic practices of nursing students.