



Who Is That Person? Nursing Hierarchy

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Nursing Hierarchy

- **STAFF NURSE** - Nurse on the unit who does direct patient care: (s)he can tell you what is going on with the patient. They coordinate the day-to-day care of the patient: making sure orders get carried out, administer care and medications, making sure tests get scheduled and completed appropriately, etc.
- **NURSE MANAGER** – The “head” nurse of the unit who oversees the running of the unit(s), some are responsible for more than one unit: if there are problems with a nurse, tech., or some other problem on the unit, they are the ones to whom you would communicate that information.

Nursing Hierarchy

- **NURSE CASE MANAGER** - A staff nurse or advanced practice nurse who is responsible for managing a specified group of patients to expedite their movement through the system, discharge planning and assisting with placement of patient at discharge.
- **NURSE PRACTITIONER** – An advanced practice nurse who holds a Master's degree in Nursing: they function in either a physician extender role or in independent practice, seeing patients with physician support and backup. Some perform advanced procedures.
- **CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST** – An advanced practice nurse who holds a Master's degree in Nursing, works in the acute care setting and has a specific area of expertise, e.g., cardiology, general surgery. (S)he may work as a case manager or be affiliated with a specific practice/physician or may act as a unit educator.

Nursing Hierarchy and Other Support Personnel

- **RESEARCH NURSE** – A nurse who is hired to support a specific research project, frequently funded by the research grant, and sees patients, assists/performs procedures and collects/documents data.
- **SOCIAL WORKER** – A person who holds a Master's degree in Social Work and assists with assessing psychosocial issues in patients, intervenes to help with psychosocial problems, assists patients without insurance to look at availability of financial assistance (e.g., TN Care, SSI), does crisis interventions with patients and families and assists the Nurse Case Managers in placement of patients at discharge, e.g. nursing home, hospice, home care. They know a lot about community resources and are a great resource person for the patients/families.
- **UTILIZATION MANAGER** – A specially trained person who reviews patient records, assists with coding and communicates with insurers to get days certified while patients are in the hospital. They collaborate closely with the Case Managers and Social Workers to prevent “unpaid” days in the hospital. They may query you to get specific coding information and ask you to document a specific piece of information in the record.