

## Role of Clinical Nursing

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The clinical nurse specialist has been a part of the health care industrial complex in the United States for more than 60 years. Through the decades, the profession has become widely accepted in the health care system as a standardized, licensed, and fully regulated health care occupation, and one that significantly impacts the nation's economy by providing safe, low-cost, and effective evidence-based health care. Clinical nurse specialists are expert clinicians with advanced education and training in a specialized area of nursing practice who work in a wide variety of health care settings. A clinical nurse specialist's specialty may be defined by: population (such as: pediatrics, geriatrics, women's health); setting (such as: critical care or emergency room); disease or medical subspecialty (such as: diabetes or oncology); type of care (such as: psychiatric or rehabilitation); or type of problem (such as: pain, wounds, stress). Clinical nurse specialists provide diagnosis, treatment, and ongoing management of patients. They also provide expertise and support to nurses caring for patients at the bedside, help drive practice changes throughout the organization, and ensure the use of best practices and evidence-based care to achieve the best possible patient outcomes. A clinical nurse specialist (CNS) is a venerable one-person show with five major responsibilities on their shoulders: Clinical practice, research, teaching, consulting, and management. Health care doesn't operate with one set of guidelines, so a clinical nurse specialist job description is vital to the managed care movement. Because they're also a patient advocate, it's their job to coordinate money-saving services and resources but still provide optimal health outcomes. If you thrive in environments where you can care for others, have a knack for complex problem solving and can take on a leadership role, the clinical nurse specialist role could be right up your alley. One of the best parts of being a CNS is the ability to work in a specialized area of health care, like acute care nursing or geriatric nursing. The growth of managed care has made a clinical nurse specialist far from simple and straightforward. Their time

is divvied up in a variety of ways with the ultimate goal of finding cost-saving measures and improving practices and outcomes. On the job, clinical nurse specialist roles can vary depending on their specialty, but general tasks include: Optimizing patient care by working with nursing staff. This includes evaluating current practices, reviewing alternatives, consultations with patient care managers and providing education to staff. Make decisions on where to allocate staff and resources, Develop specialized treatment plans after patient examinations, Educating patients and families on how to best manage their conditions, Incorporate practices to promote staff teamwork, Analyze patient data and outcomes, Participate with colleagues on new research. Throw out the idea that nursing is all bedside care. If you're interested in the inner workings of a health care organization and identifying better ways to do things, a clinical nurse specialist career could be right for you.

Changes in health care delivery occur at a furious pace and CNSs are the masters of implementing change. These changes include the introduction of evidence-based practices and more effective and efficient ways to deliver safe care. The work of a CNS is collaboration in action—multidisciplinary and multispecialty teams are convened to address clinical care issues. They keep the emergency nurses of today current with changes in practice and help prepare the emergency nurses of tomorrow. An effective CNS can be a key factor in nurse satisfaction, which helps with both recruitment and retention of qualified emergency nurses, which saves money that would be spent for recruitment and orientation. More satisfied nurses may lead to more satisfaction among patients and that can result in increased patient volumes and reimbursement. The impact of a CNS is difficult to measure in dollars and cents, but there are many ways in which CNS practice affects the bottom line. In *The Youngest Science*, Lewis Thomas equated nurses with glue; the glue that holds hospitals together and enables them to function. To build on that analogy, the CNS is the glue that holds the clinical aspects of nursing together, which in turn allows the nurses to function, that is, to take care of patients. If there was ever a time when CNSs were needed, it is now.