



NMNEC Concept: Health Care Delivery Systems

Mega Concept: Professional Nursing

Category: Care Delivery

Concept Name: Healthcare Delivery Systems

Concept Definition:

Structured systems involved in the delivery of health care services.

Scope and Categories:

Healthcare delivery systems are structured social systems purposely designed for the delivery of healthcare services by specialized workforces. This collection of people provides varied services to defined communities, populations, or markets. The scope of healthcare delivery systems is very broad. To establish an understanding the scope of the healthcare delivery systems the scope will be limited to those organizations that provide a range of healthcare services for health promotion, illness, and wellness care. There is a large variety of distinction, form, and function of healthcare organizations such as hospitals, ambulatory care centers, nursing homes and long term care facilities, clinics, home health and hospice care. Health care delivery systems are designed to meet the needs of a community or a population. Health care delivery systems are regulated at the federal, state and local levels. These regulations all affect the quality of the care delivered and the financial viability of the various organizations. These are also systematically designed for a health related purpose, but do not deliver the type of services provided by pharmaceutical or manufacturing companies.

Healthcare delivery systems can be broadly classified and categorized by the mission, financial classifications, and ownership. A healthcare delivery system may have a broad or specific mission with a delivery focus. The financial classifications classifies the purpose of the healthcare delivery system such as for profit systems that generate earnings for stakeholders, and not-for-profit systems that generate earnings that are used for organizational purposes. A healthcare delivery system to be viable must generate revenues to meet expenses of the organization. Failure to cover expenses risks longevity and existence of the healthcare delivery system and reorganization or closure is expected as a result. The ownership of healthcare organizations are classified as privately or publicly owned. Publicly owned systems are commonly seen as community based with the support of government funding. Tax supported county hospital and public health departments are examples. Privately owned healthcare delivery systems are not generally supported by public funding. Healthcare delivery systems are designed to meet the challenges of the healthcare environment, regardless of structure and



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institutional arrangement. The delivery system must be ready to manage cost and maintain services. Health care has changed over the years and has become more complex with a greater number of people and processes involved in the delivery of quality care.

Attributes:

Each organization has a purpose, a structure, and members of the workforce. Health Care Delivery Systems are distinguished from other types of organizations and are designed to help others achieve and maintain optimal health and/or well-being.

Major Attributes

- Unique purpose of providing health care services
- Specialized work force requiring extensive education and experiential learning
- Public trust helps establish a social contract between the public and healthcare delivery systems

The purpose of the healthcare delivery system can be determined by its mission, vision, and values. Regardless of the type of healthcare delivery system, the profit status, or ownership arrangement, the purpose is to provide healthcare services. The knowledge and skills the specialized workforce brings to the healthcare delivery system are necessary for the organization to maintain standards and ensure quality outcomes. Despite the waning of public trust in the healthcare delivery systems, people still turn to their physicians and nurses to advise and continue to seek services for healthcare needs.

Minor Attributes

- Structure is the collective of formal rules and policies that govern organizational practices that promote effective management of materials and resources.
- Structure generates the organizational environment and the factors affecting the decisions and responses to demands and challenges encountered during daily operations.

A healthcare delivery system needs a sufficient structure to support its processes and operations and a balance needs to be maintained without unnecessary constraints. There is an interplay between internal and external environments of the healthcare delivery system where decisions and operations are affected by perceived forces from the external environment. Standardized practices in an organized healthcare delivery system ensure optimal patient safety and work processes that support quality care. Policies and procedures are the legal guidelines required to negotiate actions and resolve the conflicts to meet the environmental challenges of the healthcare delivery systems.



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Theoretical Links:

- Bureaucracy Theory focuses on authority and control to achieve efficient production within a closed system, although the human dimension is not well defined.
- Complexity Theory is used in understanding the healthcare delivery system as a complex, adaptive system that accounts for the complexity created by social systems within an environment.
- Systems Theory views the organization as a social system focused on the social components of the work environment.
- Organizational Economic Theory is used to comprehend the health system design as a product of relations between external and internal influences on economic performance.

Context to Nursing/Healthcare:

The nursing profession is the largest healthcare professional group utilizing specialized skills and knowledge as an integral part of healthcare delivery. In addition to providing direct patient care, nursing roles are inclusive of management, case-management, infection control, managers of information technology, human resource specialists, quality/risks managers, educators, and policy makers. The various nursing roles all entail a focus on enhancing the healthcare service environment. Healthcare delivery systems are required to provide information to regulatory agencies and the public at large producing more transparency in healthcare. As healthcare reform continuously reshapes delivery systems the nurses' role in influencing system redesign is paramount in maintaining healthcare quality. Government agencies such as Center for Medicaid and Medicare services (CMS) have brought to light the delivery systems social and fiscal responsibility through value based purchasing programs in which nursing is a key element for attaining the value based metrics.

Interrelated Concepts:

- Leadership: Organizational thinking has changed to where organizations are more fluid, adaptive, and dependent on an activated workforce. Encountering changes in the health care systems internally and externally, a health care delivery system must have effective leadership.
- Health Policy: Health Policy is goal-directed decision made about health that is the result of an authorized, public decision-making process that impacts the mission of healthcare systems.
- Health Care Economics: The U.S. health care services sector accounts for approximately 18-20% of the United States' economy. The federal and state governments provide about 45%



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of the financing for health care in the United States. The economic actions of these governments will have wide-ranging effects across the services sector.

- **Health Care Quality:** Healthcare delivery systems are charged with maintaining and improving the quality of care.
- **Health Care Law:** The collection of laws that have a direct impact on the delivery of health care or on the relationship among those in the business of health care or between providers and recipients of health care.

New Mexico Nursing Education Consortium (NMNEC) Required Exemplars:

- Local Health Care Delivery Agencies/Systems
- Comparative International Health Care Systems
- Care models developing under Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)
- Private vs. Public vs. Specialized Mission (i.e., Veterans Administration [VA], Indian Health Service [IHS])

Optional Exemplars:

- Emergency Medical Systems (EMS)



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Resources:

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