The faculty of the Department of Nursing concurs with the tenets outlined by the Declaration of Alma-Ata at the International Conference on Primary Care sponsored by the World Health Organization in 1978. Health, defined as a state of physical, mental and social well-being—not merely the absence of disease or infirmity—is a fundamental human right.

*Primary Health Care (PHC)*, a conceptual model, encompasses the processes and beliefs about the ways in which health care is delivered. PHC is essential, evidence-based care universally accessible to individuals and families in their communities and includes

- health promotion,
- disease prevention,
- primary care,
- population health, and
- community development within an integrated systems framework.

In the delivery of PHC, the faculty also endorses the key role played by the intra-disciplinary nursing team in the delivery of primary care, community care, public health, and health promotion and health advocacy efforts. Through undergraduate and graduate nursing education programs grounded in PHC, the Temple nursing faculty accept the challenge embedded in Chapter 13 of the Children’s Health Care Act (Act 1992-113, 62 P.S. §5001.101 et. seq)—that is, the Primary Health Care Practitioner Program.
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*Primary care*, in turn, is defined as one component of *PHC*. As defined by the Institute of Medicine (1994), *primary care* is the provision of integrated, accessible health care services by clinicians who are accountable for addressing a large majority of personal health care needs, developing a sustained partnership with patients, and practicing in the context of family and community. Frequently, *primary care* is seen as the first level of contact in the health care system for individuals and families. In Pennsylvania, primary care practitioners are defined as family physicians, pediatricians, internists, obstetricians/gynecologists, dentists, certified registered nurse practitioners (CRNPs), certified nurse midwives, and physician assistants.

Registered professional nurses (RNs) and CRNPs participate in the delivery of *PHC* across diverse settings. RNs are licensed to *diagnose and treat human responses to actual or potential health problems* through such services as case-finding, health teaching, health counseling, and provision of care supportive to or restorative of life and well-being. The Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing certifies RNs educated as nurse practitioners to provide *primary care* in their practice areas, working collaboratively with physicians. CRNPs extend their nursing practice to include the diagnosis, treatment, and management of common acute and chronic illnesses.

While the Institute of Medicine uses the following definitions as components of the concept *primary care*, the nursing faculty employs such components as descriptive of the broader construct of *Primary Health Care*.

- **Integrated**—the provision of *comprehensive, coordinated, and continuous* services that provide a seamless process of care. Integration combines events and information about events occurring in disparate settings and levels of care and over time, preferably throughout the life span.

- **Accessible**—the ease with which a patient can initiate an interaction for any health problem with a clinician and includes efforts to eliminate
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barriers such as those posed by geography, administrative hurdles, financing, culture, and language.

- **Health care services**—the array of services performed by health care professionals or under their direction, for the purpose of promoting, maintaining, or restoring health.

- **Clinician**—the individual with the recognized scientific knowledge base with the authority to direct the delivery of personal health services to patients.

The educational programs offered within the Department of Nursing focus on PHC and emphasize the need for quality health care delivery to all Pennsylvania residents. Graduates of both undergraduate and graduate nursing programs deeply appreciate the need for all residents to enjoy a defined Health Care Home—a home in which a primary care provider, registered nurses, allied health professionals, and medical and dental professionals serve the health care needs of patients within their communities. These beliefs form the basis for the educational programs offered by the faculty of the Department of Nursing.
References


The Professional Nursing Law, Act of May 22, 1951, P/ L/ 317, No. 69.


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