

Career Spotlight



CDC NERD Academy



Public Health Nurse

A public health nurse plays a vital role in disease prevention and promoting community health and safety. They look at health trends, identify health risk factors, and work towards improving access to health services for all communities. They also work with the health department and healthcare facilities to design and implement health education campaigns and disease prevention activities.



Meet Pavati,
a public health nurse

Who do they work with?

Public health nurses collaborate with different professionals, including healthcare administrators (e.g., the people who run hospitals and clinics) and local, state, and federal public health officials.

Where do they work?

Public health nurses work in many settings, such as community healthcare clinics, schools, local and state health departments, and federal and international public health agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Some public health nurses even go to people's homes to provide care and education.

What skills do they use?

Public health nurses have excellent clinical skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, analytical skills, and can collaborate with different professionals. They also have problem solving skills and an ability to adapt. Public health nurses must not only know the science of the disease but must also understand the community in which they work to gain people's trust and communicate in an effective and culturally-relevant way.

What qualifications do they need?

Public health nurses are registered nurses (RNs) who have a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree or an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN). Nurses with an advanced degree of Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), or a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) can expand their public health nursing capacity to include additional clinical, leadership, or research roles.

