



Introduction

According to CDC and others, an estimated 25,000 nurses provide pre- and post- travel clinical care to U.S. travelers. In 2012, the American Travel Health Nurses Association (ATHNA) began a seven year journey to achieve American Nurses Association (ANA) recognition of travel health nurses (THNs) as a specialty group of professional nurses.

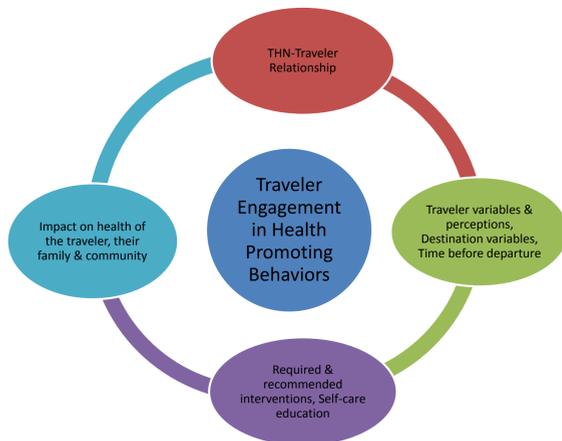


Objectives

1. Document the role and required level of U.S. THN skills and knowledge
2. Develop a THN Conceptual Framework and Code of Ethics
3. Achieve ANA recognition of travel health nursing as a nursing specialty



Conceptual Framework



Why ANA Specialty Recognition Matters

Provide standards for THNs, other health professionals and the public about what constitutes travel health nursing practice

Promote and guide the delivery of pre and post-travel quality nursing care

Facilitate the development and dissemination of professional nursing knowledge in travel health in education environments

Serve as a resource to THNs and their employers for job descriptions, orientation manuals, ongoing training, and professional promotion

Serve as a reference for the scope and performance standards of travel health nursing for use by governments and the legal system

Promote participation in travel health nursing research and evidence-based practice

Guide performance improvement initiatives in clinical and organizational environments and promote ethical practice

Serve as a vehicle to advance the specialty of travel health nursing and improve health outcomes for travelers and the communities to which they travel and return.

Methods

Between 2012 and 2019, ATHNA's Board of Directors convened a series of working groups to document the role of the US THN and to meet the 14 ANA criteria required for specialty recognition. 81% of 200 nurses identified this as the highest professional priority. A two year role delineation initiative was undertaken, involving experienced nurses from multiple practice settings who reviewed the professional literature and job descriptions. A major membership campaign was launched and per ANA requirements, a series of 5 documents were then developed.

Summary of Results

Documents Developed:

- A History of THNs in the US
 - THN Code of Ethics
 - THN Conceptual Framework
 - Forecasting THN Trends
 - *Scope and Standards of Travel Health Nursing, 3rd Edition*
- 500% Increase in ATHNA Membership with over 1500 members who represent all 50 states and 14 practice settings



Forecasting Travel Trends

- **More Travel:** continuous increase in the number and diversity of travelers both leaving and visiting the US
- **More Technology:** high quality services via video/telehealth visits, the development of new travel health apps, point of service labs, and new service settings such as pharmacies
- **Planetary Health:** the health of individuals is connected to the both the health of animals and the environment.
- **Vaccine Considerations:** new vaccines will focus on specific groups – such as pregnant travelers
- **Cost Containment:** need for high quality comprehensive services that are affordable and sustainable.
- **Organizational Concerns:** collaborating with other members of the health care team as more and more staff are engaged in travel health care.

Conclusions

Through a seven year effort that involved 1) engaging a working group of expert U.S. travel health nurses from a multitude of practice settings, 2) completing a role delineation study, 3) researching national and international guidelines and competencies, and 4) utilizing multiple methods to enlarge its membership, ATHNA has:

Developed a **Comprehensive Description of the Scope of U.S. Travel Health Nursing:** the What, Who, Where, Why and How of the specialty.

Substantiated the **Expert Knowledge and Skills** required to effectively work in the role of a competent U.S. THN

Developed **Professional Competencies** for six Standards of Practice and ten Standards of Professional Performance
Issued a **Model Core Curriculum** and travel health nursing **Glossary** on its website

Written the first **Code of Ethics for Travel Health Nurses**
Increased its membership **500%** to over 1400 members from all 50 U.S. states and 14 practice settings

Accomplished its goal to complete the application process for official recognition by the American Nurses Association of travel health nursing as a nursing specialty. Application currently pending with ANA

Acknowledgement

Special acknowledgement and thanks to Carol Bickford, Senior Policy Advisor, ANA, for her valuable assistance in this endeavor.

Contact

Gail Rosselot
President of ATHNA
Email: garosselot@aol.com
Website: www.athna.org

References

American Nurses Association. (2015). Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice (3rd ed.). Silver Spring, MD: ANA.
American Nurses Association. (2015). Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements. Silver Spring, MD: ANA.
Fukada M. Nursing Competency: Definition, Structure and Development.
[Yonago Acta Med. 2018 Mar; 61\(1\): 1-7. Royal College of Nursing. \(2018\) Competencies: Travel health nursing: career and competence development. London: RCN.](#)