

Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)

There are four primary components to the **Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)** role:

- ◇ Clinical expert with advanced assessment skills and advanced pharmacology
- ◇ Consultant
- ◇ Educator
- ◇ Researcher

These four components are integrated into a practice setting. A CNS utilizes evidence-based practice and critical thinking skills to **influence patient care/practice** and **clinical outcomes**. A CNS serves as a **role model to staff, mentors** and supervises less experienced staff, identifies and researches problems and then **applies research findings** to improve patient care outcomes. A CNS is a specialist in a focal area of expertise: cardio-vascular, women's health, occupational health, oncology, school health and gerontology, to list a few. A CNS can serve as a **case manager or consultant** on complicated patient care issues and develops tools to improve the quality of patient care. A CNS can serve as an **educator** to other health care professionals or to patients and families in order to promote health care education and disease prevention.

The CNS role enables the individual to strongly influence staff skills and relationships, as well as working closely with patients and families in order to impact quality care and patient satisfaction. The Doctorate in Nursing Practice Clinical Nurse Specialist program is based on the National Association for Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) Doctorate Competencies to "provide broader and more in-depth preparation for the APN role that includes, but is not limited to, an expanded theoretical and scientific foundation for practice; expertise in knowledge synthesis and translation into practice; expertise in evaluating system-level issues, designing solutions and leading organization-wide change; development of leadership skills that promote *interprofessional* collaboration; employing information technology to improve systems of care and the ability to influence and shape health policy" (2009, p.7)

