

**North Carolina Division of Public Health  
Public Health Nursing Professional Development Unit**

**Challenging the Physical Assessment of Adults Enhanced Role  
Registered Nurse (PAA ERRN) Course**

Revised July 2020

COURSE CHALLENGE

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina Institute of Public Health (NCIPH) offers the **Physical Assessment of Adults Enhanced Role Registered Nurse (PAA ERRN) Course\*** under a contractual arrangement with the NC Division of Public Health. Registered nurses employed by local health departments in North Carolina may not provide comprehensive clinical evaluations (to include physical assessment) of adult clients and/or bill Medicaid for those services unless they have successfully completed the **PAA ERRN Course** or successfully challenged the course.

It is the responsibility of the agency to assure that any RN performing this role has successfully completed the appropriate education and clinical practicum, had her/his initial competency validated by an independent advanced-practice provider and annually maintains competency in performing this role.

**Eligibility**

Qualified registered nurses may request to challenge the didactic portion of the **PAA ERRN Course**. Circumstances that may qualify the registered nurse to challenge the course are:

- RN was previously rostered as PAA ERRN in North Carolina AND has been away from PAA practice for less than five years. *Any former PAA ERRN who has not practiced in this role for more than five years must retake the PAA ERRN Course and complete the course practicum and check-off.*
- Completion of an equivalent adult physical assessment course within the last five years;
- *Reciprocity* (prior experience in another state as a PAA ERRN equivalent). Registered nurses who have extensive experience and training in providing adult health clinical services while working in another state or U.S. territory are eligible to challenge the PAA ERRN Course.

**Challenge Process**

- 1) Submit completed application to challenge the PAA Training and any supporting documentation via email to:  
Susan Little, Chief Public Health Nurse for the NC Division of Public Health at [susan.little@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:susan.little@dhhs.nc.gov)
- 2) The chief public health nurse reviews request and supporting documentation and notifies the registered nurse and UNC staff if approved to take the challenge;
- 3) UNC staff collect challenge fee from the registered nurse or employing agency (currently \$275);
- 4) UNC staff administer the written exam from the PAA ERRN Course to the registered nurse. This exam is proctored by UNC faculty on-site in Chapel Hill. If successful, the registered nurse is eligible to move on to the clinical practicum component; the RN will work with her agency to complete appropriate planning documents and ensure that an appropriate clinical practicum experience is arranged.
- 5) UNC staff arrange for the registered nurse to complete the final check-off and write-up;
- 6) Upon satisfactory completion of the final check-off and write-up, UNC staff notify the NC Division of Public Health that the registered nurse has satisfactorily completed the requirements to be rostered as a PAA ERRN by the NC Division of Public Health;
- 7) UNC staff issue notice that the course has been successfully challenged; NC DPH staff (from the office of the chief public health nurse) issues the PAA ERRN the Certificate to Practice as a PAA ERRN.

## **Provision of Services in LHD Clinics by a Registered Nurse Awaiting Rostering as a PAA ERRN**

Any registered nurse may assist advanced-practice providers (NP and PA), physicians, or PAA ERRNs who provide adult health clinical evaluations (i.e., room set-ups, histories, treatments, etc.). The registered nurse cannot be the highest-level provider to see a client who needs a comprehensive or “illness-focused” assessment nor bill for the service she/he provides in assisting a provider.

### **CONTACTS**

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