

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CLASS**

The REGISTERED NURSE EPIDEMIOLOGIST provides education and consultation to hospital and clinic staff regarding the prevention and spread of infection.

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES**

This is a single classification and not currently part of a series of classes.

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1.**Consultation.** Typical tasks: provides ongoing in-service training to hospital employees on infection control; conducts orientation for new employees on infection control and isolation techniques; provides consultation and recommendations to health care staff on isolated infection control incidents such as when a nurse is accidentally pricked by a needle which was used on a patient who had a communicable disease or when a nurse gives mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a child being admitted to the hospital and the child is found later to have a communicable disease.
- 2.**Research.** Typical tasks: conducts studies to determine risk factors leading to infections such as methods of sterilization or disinfection, use of IV's, catheters or machines and airflow; conducts special studies such as how infections are transmitted (community acquired vs. hospital acquired), community trends, and special infectious problems relating to urinary tract infections, surgical wounds, c-sections, renal transplants; tracks patients for long-term studies concerning infection, such as pneumonia studies; researches isolation techniques of highly resistant organisms to antibiotics; conducts surveillance of infection outbreaks and collects data on infection rates, laboratory data, patient information, and outbreaks of certain organisms; reviews charts, collects data and notes trends which indicate spread of infection among patients; identifies potential outbreaks and infection hazards; keeps current on the latest research and breakthroughs through reading and seminars.
- 3.**Administrative Duties.** Typical tasks: participates on committees and task forces to study and make recommendations regarding the prevention and spread of infection, environmental safety, and other relevant topics; writes and updates agency policies and procedures on infection control and helps departments write prevention control policies relevant to them; attends and participates in meetings with state and county health officials, department heads, head nurses, physicians, staff from the Department of Microbiology and Respiratory Therapy and laboratories to discuss current issues; reviews and audits agency and departmental techniques, procedures and policies to assure that they are effective and that proper techniques and procedures are being followed; collects data on infection rates and reports communicable diseases such as hepatitis, AIDS, or syphilis to the Department of Health; reports special or unique problems to the Center for Disease Control.

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS**

Employees in this class are in regular in-person contact with patients to discuss problems, provide and collect information, and obtain cultures, and with nurses to provide in-service training, consultation, review policies, procedures, and techniques, and to gather information on patient status. They have occasional in-person

contact with laboratories, head nurses, department heads, physicians, staff from the Microbiology Department and Respiratory Therapy to problem-solve and isolate infection problems and to discuss potential health hazards and policy changes. They are in occasional contact in person and through reports and correspondence with county, State and Federal health authorities and other hospitals to establish reporting standards, to establish or change policies and to report communicable diseases.

### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED**

Employees in this class receive general supervision from a physician Director of Nursing Services or other administrative superior who reviews reports, correspondence and policies/procedures and through frequent meetings to discuss goals and objectives, priorities, problems, and accomplishments. Work performed by employees in this class is governed by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Standards, Oregon Nurse Practices Act, Center for Disease Control Standards, state laws for communicable disease reporting, State and Federal occupational health laws, and agency infection control policies and procedures.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Positions in this class are primarily found in hospitals, clinics and health care facilities. They require the willingness to work in the environment associated with the position's location and purpose including contact with patients having infectious or communicable diseases. Some positions require the willingness to maintain a sympathetic and understanding attitude toward the mentally ill, mentally retarded, and handicapped and the willingness to work overtime, on-call and/or rotating schedules.

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES (KSA)**

Extensive knowledge of microbiology, virology, and epidemiology.

Extensive knowledge of use of antibiotics.

Extensive knowledge of isolation techniques.

General knowledge of medical and nursing principles and procedures.

General knowledge of State and Federal laws governing infection control and reporting of communicable diseases.

General knowledge of surveillance techniques used in hospitals and clinics.

Basic knowledge of statistics for data collection and reporting.

Skill in professional nursing including specialization in virology, epidemiology and isolation techniques.

Skill in preparing accurate and precise written reports on infection hazards and outbreaks.

Skill in understanding scientific studies and applying results to problems.

Skill in oral communication to obtain and/or provide information to variety of people.

Ability to communicate to all levels of staff through in-service training programs and consultation.

Ability to prepare training packages for staff.

Ability to assess, organize and prioritize workload.

Ability to analyze a problem and construct a solution.

Ability to implement programs and evaluate effectiveness.  
Ability to conduct investigations and observe procedures in a nonthreatening manner.  
Ability to read and understand Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Standards and state and federal standards for infection control.  
Ability to participate and effectively contribute on committees and task forces on a variety of infection control problems and concerns.  
Ability to gather, record, and assess data pertaining to patients and disease hazards.  
Ability to develop and use computer programs to manipulate data and generate reports.

### **SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS**

Employees must possess a valid Oregon Registered Professional Nurse License at the time of appointment.

**NOTE:** The KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS are required for initial consideration. ABILITIES may be required for initial consideration, at any time during the selection process, or during a trial service period as a final stage of the selection process. Some duties performed by positions in this class may require different KSA's. No attempt is made to describe every KSA required for **all** positions in this class. Additional KSA requirements will be explained on the recruiting announcement.

Adopted 7/90

Revised

Examples of work are typical of duties assigned to this class. No attempt is made to describe every duty performed by all positions in this class.