



Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing: Scope and Standards of WOC Practice, 2nd Edition

An Executive Summary

Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society Task Force

ABSTRACT

Wound, ostomy, and continence (WOC) nursing was recognized as a nursing specialty by the American Nurses Association in February 2010, and the Society published the original scope and standards of WOC nursing practice in May 2010. The *Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 2nd Edition* is the definitive resource promoting excellence in professional practice, quality care, and improved patient outcomes in WOC specialty practice. It can be used to articulate the value of WOC nurses to administrators, legislators, payers, patients, and others. The second edition also provides an overview of the scope of WOC nursing practice including a description of the specialty, the history and evolution of WOC nursing, characteristics of WOC nursing practice, and description of the trispecialty. The document describes various WOC nurse roles, populations served, practice settings, care coordination, and collaboration. Educational preparation, levels of practice within WOC specialty nursing, certification, mandate for continuous professional development, ethics, current trends, future considerations and challenges, and standards of WOC nursing practice and professional performance with competencies for each standard are provided. The purpose of this Executive Summary is to describe the process for developing the scope and standards document, provide an overview of the scope of WOC nursing practice, and list the standards of practice and professional performance along with the competencies for each level of WOC nurse provider. The original document is available from the WOCN Society's online book store (www.wocn.org).

KEY WORDS: Competencies for professional practice and professional performance, Scope and standards of nursing practice, Specialty nursing practice, Standards of practice and professional performance, wound, ostomy, and continence nursing.

INTRODUCTION

For over 5 decades, WOC nurses (also known as enterostomal therapy [ET] nurses) have cared for individuals with complex needs. WOC nursing has a rich history of discovery, innovation, creativity, excellence, and devotion to the care and management of individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence problems. WOC nurses provide a wide range of services to individuals with acute and chronic wounds, fecal

and urinary diversions, fecal and urinary continence issues, fistulas, and percutaneous tubes or drains. WOC nurses play pivotal roles in providing optimal care to individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs of all ages and in all healthcare settings. WOC nurses choose this specialty as their life's work because they are drawn to the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives on a daily basis by helping them manage wounds, ostomies, and/or incontinence.

In 2010, the American Nurses Association (ANA) recognized WOC nursing as a nursing specialty, followed by the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society (WOCN) publishing the original *Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* in 2010.¹ Recognition as a specialty nursing practice helped validate the contributions of WOC nursing to the healthcare delivery system in the United States.² The second edition of the *Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*³ was developed to update and describe the scope of practice and standards of practice and professional performance for WOC specialty nursing in accordance with the ANA's current publications: *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 3rd Edition*⁴; *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements*⁵; and *Nursing's Social Policy Statement: The Essence of the Profession, 3rd Edition*.⁶

The updated document provides an overview of the scope of WOC nursing practice including a description of our specialty practice, a history and evolution of WOC nursing,

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characteristics of WOC nursing practice, and a description of the trispecialty. The latest edition also describes WOC nurse roles, populations served, practice settings, care coordination, and collaboration by WOC nurses. The manual discusses educational preparation and levels of WOC nurse providers, certification standards, the mandate for continuous professional development, ethics in WOC nursing, and current issues and trends, along with future considerations and challenges for our specialty practice. In addition, the scope of practice is accompanied by standards of WOC nursing practice and professional performance that are based on the authoritative statements of the ANA⁴ regarding the duties of all RNs. The standards define the responsibilities of the WOC nurse and guide professional practice and performance. Competencies are included for each standard which provide evidence of compliance with that particular standard.

The purpose of this Executive Summary is to describe the process for updating and developing the document, provide an overview of the scope of WOC nursing practice, and outline the standards of practice and professional performance, along with the competencies for each level of WOC nurse provider. The full document is available from the WOCN Society's online book store (www.wocn.org).

SCOPE AND STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

In 2014, the WOCN Society convened a task force of WOC nurse members of the Society to revise the first edition of the *Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*¹ to reflect current principles of practice and professional role performance and other changes that impacted WOC specialty nursing. The task force used criteria from the following resources to guide the revision of the document: *Recognition of a Nursing Specialty, Approval of a Specialty Nursing Scope of Practice Statement, and Acknowledgment of Specialty Nursing Standards of Practice*²; *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 3rd Edition*⁴; *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements*⁵; and *Nursing's Social Policy Statement: The Essence of the Profession, 3rd Edition*.⁶

In February 2016, a draft of the revised document was posted on the WOCN Society's Web site (www.wocn.org) and the ANA's Web site (www.nursingworld.org) for public comment. The task force reviewed the public comments, revised the draft as appropriate, and the draft (*Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 2nd Edition*)³ was submitted to the ANA for review. The draft was reviewed by the ANA's Committee on Nursing Practice Standards in February 2017 and August 2017 with suggestions for revisions, which were completed by the task force prior to submission to the ANA's Board of Directors for review. In October 2017, the ANA's Board of Directors approved the WOC nursing scope of practice and acknowledged the WOC nursing standards of practice. In January 2018, the WOCN Society published the *Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 2nd Edition*.³

SCOPE OF WOC NURSING PRACTICE

Description of the Scope

WOC care is an area of specialty practice, within the framework of nursing, in which nurses strive to advance the health, quality of life, and healthcare of all affected individuals.⁸ WOC nursing is dynamic and evolves with changes in knowl-

edge, the healthcare environment, and society. The depth and breadth of an individual specialty nurse's scope of practice are determined by the nurse's education, experience, practice setting, role, licensure, and the specific population(s) cared for by the nurse.

Definition of Woc Nursing Specialty

WOC nursing is a multifaceted, evidence-based practice that incorporates a unique body of knowledge to enable nurses to provide excellence in prevention of wound, ostomy, and/or continence problems and complications; health maintenance; therapeutic intervention; and rehabilitative and palliative nursing care to persons with select disorders of the gastrointestinal, genitourinary, and integumentary systems. WOC nursing directs its efforts at improving the quality of care, life, and health of healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs (hereafter, referred to as healthcare consumers). The term "healthcare consumer" is used for patients, persons, clients, families, groups, communities, or populations to whom the nurse is providing services.⁴

The Trispecialty of Woc Nursing

WOC nurses have a broad knowledge base in anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology, biochemistry, microbiology, medical technology, pharmacology, nutrition, psychology, sociology, and developmental theory. In addition, each specialty area (ie, wound, ostomy, continence care) has its own knowledge base and skill set to address the unique needs of healthcare consumers for prevention and treatment of wound, ostomy, and/or continence problems and complications. A key objective for WOC nurses practicing within each specialty area is to achieve positive outcomes that maximize the rehabilitation and quality of life for the individual. Major factors that determine successful outcomes for individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs are the availability, accessibility, and affordability of evidence-based specialized care and supplies.

Wound Specialty

Wound care specialists are necessary to meet the growing need for prevention and treatment of acute and chronic wounds, which creates a large and costly burden to society and the healthcare community. WOC nurses provide care to healthcare consumers across the continuum of care with varied types of acute or chronic wounds due to pressure injury; venous, arterial, or diabetes/neuropathic disease; trauma; thermal injury; surgery; and/or other disease processes (eg, cancer, infection, vasculitis, sickle cell disease, calciphylaxis). Recently, the National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel (NPUAP) changed the term "pressure ulcer" to "pressure injury."⁹ At present, the change in terminology has not been universally adopted and may require time for translation and assimilation into practice and published literature. Therefore, in this document the term "pressure ulcer" reflects the terminology used in the cited literature and is considered equivalent/interchangeable with the term "pressure injury."

Wounds can have devastating effects on the healthcare consumer, with increased morbidity and mortality due to complications. Pain, bleeding, odor, drainage, necrosis, infection, sepsis, and limb loss are some of the complications associated with wounds. It is extremely important to prevent wound infection and to maintain a high level of vigilance for any signs

of infection so that early and appropriate treatment can be provided. With specialized care, “many wounds are preventable and all wounds are manageable.”^{11(p3)}

The care and management of wounds require a high level of knowledge and ability. WOC nurses have an in-depth understanding of the risk/contributive factors, etiology, physiology/pathophysiology, and wound healing process and have strong assessment skills. WOC nurses are prepared by education and experience to identify problems and complications at early stages and intervene proactively with preventive and therapeutic interventions to manage individuals with wound care needs. In terms of prevention, the WOC nurse provides comprehensive risk assessment; uses evidence-based prevention strategies to reduce the risks of wound development and complications; provides education for healthcare consumers, families/caregivers, and staff about prevention; and leads or participates in quality improvement initiatives.

WOC nurses are often consulted for the most complex and challenging wound cases such as nonhealing/refractory wounds, atypical wounds, multiple wounds, wounds of mixed etiology, and wounds that mimic other conditions. In such difficult cases, the WOC nurse’s knowledge and expertise in assessment and management of wounds are pivotal in identifying the underlying etiology, determining factors that are delaying healing, establishing nursing diagnoses, and developing effective management/treatment plans. Throughout the process of care, WOC nurses collaborate and coordinate with other healthcare providers in developing and implementing wound treatment plans. See Table 1 for a list of selected specialized services and skills of the WOC nurse for wound care.³

Ostomy Specialty

For healthcare consumers with fecal or urinary diversions, WOC nurses (regardless of the setting) provide specialized care to maximize the individual’s independence in self-care and adaptation to the life-altering changes in their body image and function. Preoperative stoma siting is critically important to the rehabilitation of the individual undergoing an ostomy. Individuals with preoperative stoma site marking and education by a WOC specialty nurse have fewer complications and an increased quality of life and independence compared to those without stoma siting and education.^{10–14} Two position papers developed by the WOCN Society in collaboration with the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons and the American Urologic Association included a recommendation that individuals undergoing a fecal or urinary diversion should have their stoma site marked preoperatively by a surgeon (ie, colon rectal surgeon, urologist) or a certified ostomy nurse.^{15,16}

After ostomy surgery, individuals are faced with life-altering changes that can be overwhelming without proper care and education. They may experience difficulties with pouch leakage, odor, altered body image/self-image, and sexual and intimacy issues. In addition, a myriad of stomal and peristomal complications can develop including the following: stomal retraction, stenosis, prolapse, or peristomal hernia; mucocutaneous separation; peristomal skin complications (eg, allergic contact dermatitis, fungal infection/candidiasis, peristomal moisture-associated skin damage/irritant dermatitis, varices, pyoderma gangrenosum, medical device- or medical adhesive-related skin injury, folliculitis, pseudoverrucous lesions).^{17,18} In a recent study of WOC nurses in the United States and ET

nurses in Canada (N = 796), 77.7% of the nurses reported that 26% to 100% of individuals with ostomies in their practice developed peristomal skin problems due to inappropriate use or fit of the pouching system.¹¹

The selection and fitting of an ostomy pouching system, which is considered a prosthetic device, require a specially educated nurse who is qualified and skilled to assess and determine the unique medical and physical needs of each individual. Quality of life and individual preferences are key factors for the WOC nurse to consider when selecting a pouching system, making treatment choices, and planning and delivering ostomy care.

The need for specialized ostomy care continues well beyond the immediate surgical period. WOC nurses are needed to provide long-term support and follow-up care to healthcare consumers with permanent ostomies, facilitate participation in support groups, and advocate for coverage of ostomy prosthetic devices. According to the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons, “...all patients who have ostomies should have access to an ostomy nurse for follow-up care, as needed and wherever possible.”^{19(p383)}

To facilitate the rehabilitation of the individual undergoing ostomy surgery or with an ostomy, whether temporary or permanent, WOC nurses are invaluable. See Table 1 for a list of selected specialized services and skills of the WOC nurse for ostomy care.³

Other complex problems that require the specialized skills and care of a WOC nurse are fistulas and percutaneous tubes and drains. WOC nurses play key roles in developing effective skin care strategies and pouching systems to contain drainage, protect the skin, and control odor and in developing methods for stabilizing drains and tubes to prevent leakage. Therefore, whether helping an individual learn routine ostomy care or deal with the most challenging and complex problems or complications due to an ostomy, fistula, or percutaneous tube/drain, WOC nurses make life-changing differences and facilitate positive outcomes for the individual.

Continence Specialty

Living with fecal or urinary dysfunction and incontinence places a great burden on affected individuals and their families or caregivers. Incontinence is linked to declining mental health, psychological distress, depression, falls (with and without injury), and caregiver stress.²⁰ Loss of continence can cause skin and wound care complications and may contribute to individuals being prematurely placed in long-term care facilities.²¹ Unfortunately, many individuals, family/caregivers, and healthcare providers do not intervene in continence issues, believing that loss of continence is a normal part of the aging process.²² In most cases, fecal and/or urinary incontinence can be successfully treated or managed based on a thorough assessment and with the expert care and guidance of a continence specialty nurse working in collaboration with other healthcare providers. In situations where catheters are used to manage urinary continence problems, WOC nurses are valuable resources for catheter care and management, identifying and preventing catheter-associated complications (infection) and avoiding inappropriate use of indwelling catheters. Successful outcomes for individuals with continence problems require specialized care. See Table 1 for a list of selected specialized services and skills of the WOC nurse for continence care.³

TABLE 1.
Specialized Services and Skills of WOC Nurses^a

Wound Care	Ostomy Care	Continence Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing oversight of wound care to assist other healthcare providers in management of acute and chronic wounds. • Developing evidence-based wound care protocols and education materials for other healthcare providers and caretakers to use. • Conducting a comprehensive wound assessment including differential assessment. • Performing a lower-extremity assessment of the limb, feet, and nails if a lower-extremity wound is present, including assessment of the circulatory and sensory status (eg, ankle brachial index, monofilament screening). • Selecting and/or utilizing the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ topical therapy, dressings, cleansers, and products for wound and skin care ◦ pressure redistribution surfaces ◦ compression therapy ◦ off-loading techniques ◦ advanced treatment modalities/adjunctive therapies (eg, skin substitutes; growth factors; negative pressure wound therapy; low-frequency, noncontact ultrasound) • Performing chemical cauterization. • Performing wound debridement (eg, conservative sharp instrumental wound debridement; autolytic; enzymatic). • Collecting wound cultures to confirm a diagnosis of wound infection and guide antibiotic therapy. • Assessing the nutritional status and providing support. • Educating the healthcare consumer, family, and caregivers regarding signs/symptoms of complications that should be reported to the healthcare provider. • Counseling the healthcare consumer about lifestyle modifications to facilitate wound healing, maintain a stable wound, prevent recurrence, or promote palliation. • Evaluating wound healing progress and measuring outcomes. • Coordinating referrals for additional services and/or adjunctive therapies, including follow-up care and evaluation of the effectiveness of the services or therapies (eg, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, electrical stimulation, dietician, physical and/or occupational therapy, vascular or plastic surgery). • Advocating for insurance coverage of necessary supplies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preoperative stoma siting and education. • Sizing, selecting, and fitting of an ostomy pouching system and accessories, including complex prosthetic fitting (eg, convex pouching systems, high-output pouching systems). • Educating the individual, family, and caregiver how to change, empty, and manage the pouching system; normal function of the ostomy; normal characteristics of the stoma and peristomal skin; and signs of complications to report to the healthcare provider. • Treating stomal and peristomal skin complications. • Instructing the patient about the technique for colostomy irrigation (if indicated). • Counseling for sexual, dietary, and vocational concerns. • Advocating for reimbursement of supplies, services, and access to long-term support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing a focused assessment including a relevant history to identify risks, contributive factors, and reversible causes of incontinence. • Providing education for preventive strategies: behavior, bowel, and bladder training; pelvic muscle reeducation; biofeedback. • Urodynamic testing and/or other diagnostic tests and pharmacotherapy by WOC advanced practice RNs. • Selecting appropriate continence management products; prosthetic fitting. • Providing complex skin care to prevent and/or treat incontinence-related skin breakdown based on a differential assessment to distinguish incontinence-associated dermatitis from other types of skin injuries. • Selecting and managing containment products or devices (eg, absorptive products, external fecal collectors, intra-anal fecal management systems). • Providing education for management of indwelling urinary catheters (eg, indwelling urethral catheters, suprapubic catheters, catheter securement methods), external catheters, and intermittent catheterization, and for prevention and management of catheter-associated complications (eg, urinary tract infection, obstruction, leakage, skin breakdown). • Providing counseling for dietary and fluid modifications. • Developing best practice protocols and programs to prevent falls due to urinary incontinence and prevent and manage complications associated with indwelling catheters (eg, catheter-associated urinary tract infections). • Evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and the patient's progress to identify if any complications have occurred, determine if changes in the care plan are needed, and/or determine if referrals to other healthcare providers or specialists are warranted for further evaluation or treatment.

^aFrom the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society.³

WOC Nurse Roles, Practice Settings, Populations Served, and Care Coordination and Collaboration

Roles and Practice Settings

WOC nurses serve in a variety of roles including clinician, educator, consultant, researcher, and administrator, and they may engage in dual or multiple roles. Although the majority of WOC nurses work in the acute care setting, WOC nurses practice in other settings such as outpatient care, home healthcare, long-term care, nursing homes, industry, academia, and private practice. WOC nurses may practice in multiple clinical settings that are affiliated with/or part of a large organization or healthcare system, or they may function

as an independent consultant to several settings. In all healthcare settings, WOC nursing roles vary across the professional spectrum from entry level to advanced practice, depending on the nurse's education, experience, and licensure. In all settings, the WOC nurse utilizes the nursing process and collaborates and coordinates care to achieve optimal outcomes for individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.

Populations Served

Although the basic principles of WOC care are the same regardless of population or practice setting, certain populations may be at greater risk for wound, ostomy, and/or continence

problems and complications. Also, they may require adaptation or modifications in their care to address their unique needs including, but not limited to, the following patient populations: pediatric patients (neonates, infants, children, adolescents), older adults, patients needing palliative or hospice care, and obese patients. WOC nurses have expertise in caring for individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs across the spectrum of ages and developmental stages, including those at end of life and others with unique or special needs.

Care Coordination and Collaboration

WOC nurses partner with healthcare consumers, families/caregivers, and other healthcare providers and members of the healthcare team to coordinate and individualize wound, ostomy, and/or continence care across the continuum of care. Care is based on the assessed needs of the individual, current best practices, and ongoing evaluation of patient outcomes. By partnering with each healthcare consumer and collaborating with other healthcare providers, WOC nurses are able to individualize care and optimize the individual's outcomes. Specific, clinical cases are described in the full document to demonstrate care coordination and collaboration of WOC nurses.

Educational Preparation and Levels of WOC Nursing Providers

Educational Background

For entry-level WOC specialty nursing practice, an RN must possess at least a baccalaureate degree, have clinical nursing experience following RN licensure, graduate from an accredited Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing Education Program (WOCNEP), and/or be certified in WOC nursing by the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing Certification Board (WOCNCB). WOC nursing requires a high degree of knowledge about prevention and treatment strategies for the many diseases and conditions that result in wound, ostomy, and/or continence issues. WOC nurses must be critical thinkers, be highly skilled at comprehensive assessment, and have the ability to differentiate various diseases and atypical presentations in order to plan and implement effective care plans that integrate evidence-based practices to achieve optimal outcomes. Therefore, WOC nurses require more advanced knowledge and skills than can be obtained from basic nursing education programs or in general clinical practice settings, because even basic WOC nursing care is complex.¹

Specialty Education

To help standardize preparation of the WOC nurse, the WOCN Society has established a unique collaborative relationship with independently operated and accredited WOCNEPs to provide specialty education.^{23,24} Accreditation is a voluntary process, and WOCNEPs are accredited by the WOCN Society based on established criteria.^{23,25} The WOCNEPs follow a formal curriculum blueprint that delineates the base of knowledge and skills required for entry-level WOC nursing practice.²⁵ The curriculum and clinical experiences are designed to build on the nurse's basic and baccalaureate education and clinical experience to prepare for entry-level WOC nursing practice. Some WOCNEPs are offered as continuing nursing education programs, and others are affiliated with a college or university and the WOC nursing education is offered as a graduate-level course. However, it must be noted that the cur-

riculum blueprint and requirements are the same for all WOCNEPs, regardless of the type of program, and are designed to prepare nurses for entry-level WOC specialty nursing practice.

A WOCNEP may provide education for 1 or more areas of specialty practice that includes assessment and management of individuals with wounds, fecal and urinary diversions, and/or urinary and fecal incontinence. In addition, the curriculum includes a professional practice component that addresses role development and implementation and relevant issues that impact specialty practice. A key requirement for WOCNEPs that sets WOC nursing education apart from other educational programs is a competency-based, clinical practicum that is completed under the guidance and direction of an approved, certified WOC nurse preceptor. Information about how to become a WOC nurse and the accredited WOCNEPs is available from the WOCN Society's Web site (www.wocn.org).

Levels of WOC Nurse Providers

Each WOC nurse is accountable to practice in accordance with the licensing or certification requirements established by the state board of nursing (or other licensing/regulatory body) where the nurse practices. Graduate-level preparation or a graduate degree is not a requirement for entry into WOC nursing practice. Some roles and/or employers may require the WOC nurse to have a graduate-level degree or be prepared as an advanced practice RN in addition to their basic preparation as a WOC nurse. The WOC graduate-level prepared RN and the WOC advanced practice RN build on the scope of practice and competencies of the WOC RN and may be able to offer additional services based on their educational preparation, experience, and licensure. Specific competencies for each level of WOC nurse provider are defined for each standard of practice and professional performance. (See the section "Standards of Practice and Professional Performance for WOC Nursing.") See Table 2 for a brief summary of the requirements for basic education; specialty education and/or certification; and level of autonomy for WOC RNs, WOC graduate-level prepared RNs, and WOC advanced practice RNs.³

Certification

Certification in WOC nursing is a voluntary process that validates the specialized knowledge, skills, and expertise of nurses who meet the eligibility requirements set forth by the WOCNCB. The WOCNCB administers the certification process for WOC nursing and offers the only independently accredited certification that is solely dedicated to nurses. The WOCNCB is a distinct and financially independent entity that is incorporated separately from the WOCN Society. The WOCNCB's certifications meet the accreditation standards of the National Council for Certifying Agencies and the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification.²⁷ Graduates of WOCNEPs are eligible for certification in the specialty areas of wound, ostomy, and/or continence nursing, and nurses with baccalaureate degrees may qualify for certification by the experiential pathway. In addition, advanced practice certification in WOC specialty nursing is available through the WOCNCB for advanced practice nurses who hold a current entry-level WOCNCB certification in the specialty/specialties for which an advanced practice certification is sought. Information about certification, recertification, and eligibility requirements is available on the WOCNCB's Web site (www.WOCNCB.org).

TABLE 2.
Levels of WOC Nurse Providers^a

WOC RN	WOC Graduate-Level Prepared RN	WOC APRN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is baccalaureate prepared and licensed as an RN. • Has successfully completed a wound, ostomy, and/or continence education program from a WOCN Society–accredited WOCNEP and/or is certified by the WOCNCB in 1 or more areas of the specialty practice. • Practices in accordance with the scope of practice for an RN and in accordance with licensure and regulatory requirements for circumstances that may require physician orders or supervision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is prepared at the master's or doctoral educational level.⁴ • Has successfully completed an accredited WOCNEP and/or is certified by the WOCNCB in 1 or more areas of the specialty practice. • Has advanced knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment due to additional educational preparation.⁴ • May choose graduate-level education to prepare for additional roles in nursing administration, education, research, etc, but the program does not prepare for licensure and recognition as an APRN. • Functions at an advanced level of nursing practice according to designated elements of the position and is not required to have additional regulatory oversight.⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a master's or doctoral degree that was obtained from a nationally accredited program that prepared the APRN with specific role and population-focused competencies. • Is prepared for advanced practice in at least one of 6 population foci (eg, family/individual across the life span, adult-gerontology, pediatrics), is licensed to practice in one of 4 APRN roles such as a clinical nurse specialist or certified nurse practitioner, and is certified as an APRN by a nationally recognized certification board.^{4,26} • In addition to education and preparation as an APRN, to prepare for entry into WOC specialty nursing practice, the APRN has successfully completed an accredited WOCNEP and/or is certified by the WOCNCB in 1 or more areas of the specialty practice. • Practices with a high level of autonomy and may practice independently or in collaboration with a physician, which is dependent on the state board of nursing and/or other regulatory bodies where the nurse practices. • Has advanced clinical knowledge and expert skills for providing direct care to patients including the following: assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of common acute and chronic illnesses and conditions (eg, disorders of the gastrointestinal, genitourinary, and integumentary systems); ordering and interpreting diagnostic and laboratory tests; and prescribing pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic agents and treatments to manage wound, ostomy, and/or continence issues. • Has enhanced abilities to synthesize data and connect theory to practice.

Abbreviations: APRN, advanced practice RN; WOCN, Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society; WOCNCB, Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing Certification Board; WOCNEP, Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing Education Program.

^aFrom Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society.³

Ethics in WOC Nursing

WOC nurses are obligated to “adhere to standards of ethical practice established by the WOCN Society and to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the highest professional standards.”^{24(p3)} WOC nursing as a specialty practice embraces the 9 provisions of the ANA's *Code of Ethics for Nurses*.^{4,5} Detailed descriptions and examples that reflect how WOC nurses have applied the following 9 provisions are available in the full scope and standards document³:

1. The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.
2. The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient.
4. The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice, makes decisions, and takes action consistent with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.
6. The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environ-

ment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality healthcare.

7. The nurse in all roles and settings advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.
8. The nurse collaborates with other healthcare professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.
9. The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and integrate principles of social justice into nursing and health policy.

Current Issues, Trends, Challenges, and Future Considerations for WOC Nursing

WOC nursing practice is impacted by current issues, trends, and challenges from changes in healthcare needs and the healthcare system. National organizations such as the Institute of Medicine (IOM; now known as the National Academy of Medicine) and the Healthy People initiative have recommended several strategies to advance the profession of nursing and improve the healthcare system.^{28,29} In accordance with recommendations from the IOM,^{28,29} WOC nurses individually and collectively (with the support of the WOCN Society)³:

- Practice to the full extent of their education and training.

- Develop and utilize multiple evidence-based clinical practice guidelines and/or best practice documents as resources for wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Achieve higher levels of education: A baccalaureate degree is required for entry-level specialty practice. Currently, 19% of the members of the WOCN Society hold master's degrees and 3% have doctoral degrees.
- Work as partners with physicians and other healthcare professionals in redesigning healthcare in the United States.
- Collect and/or utilize data for workforce planning and making policies.

Changing healthcare needs, including the growing aging population, along with the corresponding increased need and costs for services to manage chronic diseases,³⁰ also have a significant impact on the need for specialized WOC nursing services because a large number of wound, ostomy, and/or continence issues occur in older individuals. The increase in chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer, and the continued rise in obesity, enhance the risk of individuals developing wounds and continence issues and/or needing fecal or urinary diversions. WOC nurses are leaders in efforts to prevent and manage complications from those chronic conditions, which include providing education for risk reduction.

Several of the Healthy People 2020 goals are particularly relevant to WOC nursing.³¹ WOC nurses are actively engaged in efforts to make improvements in the following areas that are included in the 2020 goals: access to healthcare; health-related quality of life and well-being for all individuals; health, function, and quality of life in older adults; healthcare-associated infections (eg, surgical site infection, catheter-associated urinary tract infection); medical product safety/medical device-related injury; and disease burden and complications from chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes.³¹

To improve access to healthcare, payment reform is necessary because the needs of many individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence disorders are not being met due to limited access to necessary care and supplies. Unfortunately, reimbursement for WOC nursing services from third party payers, such as Medicare, is limited, and the lack of reimbursement limits access to outpatient specialty services for many healthcare consumers with long-term or lifelong wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.

WOC nurses, in all care settings, are engaged in efforts to influence and improve the delivery of quality healthcare. WOC nurses facilitate the achievement of high-quality standards by providing staff education, establishing criteria for documentation, and developing protocols and quality outcome measures for wound, ostomy, and/or continence care. In collaboration with the healthcare consumer, other healthcare providers, and interdisciplinary team members, WOC nurses coordinate care and services to ensure that consistent evidence-based prevention and management strategies for WOC care are utilized to achieve positive outcomes. In addition, advocacy and public policy efforts of WOC nurses and the WOCN Society focus on the needs of healthcare consumers, the specialty and profession, and the membership of the Society. The WOCN Society's³² healthcare agenda has 4 priorities that direct the public policy and advocacy goals: protect and enhance healthcare consumers' access to medically necessary wound, ostomy,

and/or continence supplies; ensure healthcare consumers' access to WOC nursing services; support funding and resources to develop nursing education and address nursing workforce issues; and participate/collaborate in quality care initiatives.

In addition to the growing numbers of older persons and individuals with chronic conditions who have or are at risk for wound, ostomy, and/or continence issues, other challenges and changes will influence the future of WOC nursing such as the following: emerging technological and surgical advances in care; uncertainty about healthcare and health insurance coverage; projected shortages of nurses, including WOC nurses, due to an aging workforce; shortages of primary care physicians; and new discoveries about the influence of genetic and genomic science on diagnosis and treatment of diseases. To meet these changes and challenges, WOC nursing will evolve and take advantage of opportunities that the various changes and challenges present. Also, WOC nurses will continue to participate in vital discussions where healthcare policy, legislation, regulation, and implementation strategies are drafted to ensure that healthcare consumers receive the care they need and deserve.

To meet future needs and challenges, WOC nurses must be proactive and empowered to advocate for themselves and healthcare consumers, negotiate for their roles, and address barriers to practice. There is an ongoing need for research to validate the value of WOC nursing on patient outcomes and the quality of care. While research is limited, 4 studies^{33–36} and a systematic review³⁷ have demonstrated the positive impact of care by WOC nurses, versus nonspecialty nurses, on healthcare consumers with pressure ulcers/injuries, surgical wounds, urinary and fecal incontinence, lower-extremity wounds, and urinary tract infections. Results from 4 other studies indicated that preoperative education (including stoma site marking) and postoperative care and education by WOC nurses led to positive outcomes for individuals with an ostomy including fewer complications and improvements in self-confidence, quality of life, independence and self-care ability, and perceived well-being.^{10,12,14,38} It is imperative for WOC nurses to continue to produce solid evidence about the effectiveness and value of WOC nursing service and the impact on quality and cost containment. Also, WOC nurses must be skilled at obtaining, understanding, and applying current research to provide effective, quality care. In addition, continued efforts are needed by WOC nurses and the WOCN Society to identify barriers to implementation of best practices and develop strategies to facilitate the translation and integration of new knowledge and evidence into clinical practice.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE FOR WOC NURSING

The standards of practice describe a competent level of WOC nursing practice for each component of the nursing process: assessment, diagnosis, outcomes identification, planning, implementation, coordination of care, health teaching and health promotion, and evaluation.⁴ The "professional performance standards describe a competent level of behavior in the professional role, including activities related to ethics, culturally congruent practice, communication, collaboration, leadership, education, evidence-based practice and research, quality of practice, professional practice evaluation, resource utilization, and environmental health."^{4(p12)} The competencies for

each standard may provide evidence of compliance with that particular standard.⁴

Application of the standards and competencies is in accordance with the individual WOC nurse's educational preparation and licensure (ie, baccalaureate prepared RN [hereafter referred to as WOC RN], WOC graduate-level prepared RN, or WOC advanced practice RN). The application of a particular standard or competency is dependent on the context and circumstances of practice, with the goal being delivery of expert, safe, efficient, and quality patient-centered care for healthcare consumers. "Whether a particular standard or competency applies depends on the circumstances."^{4(p15)} (*Note:* "Healthcare consumer" is the term used in the standards of practice and professional performance for patients, persons, clients, families, groups, communities, or populations.⁴)

Standards of Practice

Standard 1: Assessment

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN collect pertinent data and information relative to the health or situation of the healthcare consumer with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.

Competencies

The WOC RN and the WOC graduate-level prepared RN:

- Collect pertinent data related to the healthcare consumer's needs including, but not limited to, physical, functional, psychosocial, emotional, cognitive, sexual, cultural, age-related, environmental, spiritual/transpersonal, and economic assessments in a systematic and ongoing process with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.
- Recognize the importance of the assessment parameters identified by the World Health Organization, Healthy People 2020, or other organizations that influence wound, ostomy, and/or continence nursing practice.
- Integrate knowledge from global and environmental factors into the assessment process of wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Elicit the healthcare consumer's values, preferences, expressed and unexpressed needs, and knowledge of the healthcare situation as they relate to the individual's wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Recognize the impact of one's own personal attitudes, values, and beliefs related to wound, ostomy, and/or continence care during the assessment process.
- Identify barriers to effective communication based on psychosocial, literacy, financial, and cultural considerations of the person with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Assess the impact of family dynamics on the healthcare consumer's health and wellness when faced with challenges regarding wound, ostomy, and/or continence care. *Example:* Determine the impact of a complex wound, fistula, or difficult ostomy on the patient and family.
- Engage the healthcare consumer and other interprofessional team members in holistic, culturally sensitive data collection.

- Prioritize data collection based on the healthcare consumer's immediate condition, anticipated needs, or situation.
- Use wound, ostomy, and/or continence evidence-based assessment tools and techniques along with available data, information, and knowledge that are relevant to the situation to identify patterns and variances for a healthcare consumer with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs. *Example:* Use guidelines for stoma site marking to determine the most appropriate location for a stoma site that will promote adherence of the ostomy pouching system: Assess the 4 abdominal quadrants for creases, scarring, and location of the umbilicus and assess the visibility of the potential site to the patient in sitting, standing, and forward-leaning positions.^{15,16}
- Apply ethical, legal, and privacy guidelines and policies to the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of data and information.
- Recognize healthcare consumers as authorities on their own health by honoring their care preferences while tending to their wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.
- Document relevant data accurately and in a manner accessible to the interprofessional team.
- Assess the effect of interactions among individuals, family, community, and social systems on health and illness, and wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Synthesize assessment data to provide clinical understanding and focused care for the healthcare consumer with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN and the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Initiates diagnostic tests and procedures that are relevant to the current status of the healthcare consumer with wound, ostomy, and/or continence issues.
- Uses advanced assessment, knowledge, and skills to maintain, enhance, or improve health conditions for healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence issues.

Standard 2: Diagnosis

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN analyze assessment data to determine actual or potential diagnoses, problems, or issues related to wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.

Competencies

The WOC RN and the WOC graduate-level prepared RN:

- Identify actual or potential risks to the healthcare consumer's health and safety or barriers to health that may include, but are not limited to, interpersonal, systematic, cultural, or environmental circumstances. *Example:* Determine the duration of adhesion of the ostomy pouching system to identify if undermining or leakage is occurring and causing peristomal skin damage and/or if the length of adhesion is satisfactory and meets the expectations of the patient.
- Use assessment data, standardized classification systems, technology, and clinical decision support tools to articulate actual or potential diagnoses, problems, and issues. *Example:* Differentiate the typical characteristics of

pressure ulcers/injuries from other types of skin damage such as incontinence-associated dermatitis and intertriginous dermatitis.

- Verify the diagnoses, problems, and issues with the individual, family, group, community, population, and interprofessional colleagues.
- Prioritize diagnoses, problems, and issues based on mutually established goals to meet the needs of the healthcare consumer across the health-illness continuum.
- Document diagnoses, problems, and issues in a manner that facilitates the determination of the expected outcomes and plan.
- Use information and communication technologies to analyze diagnostic practice patterns of nurses and other members of the interprofessional healthcare team.
- Employ aggregate-level data to articulate diagnoses, problems, and issues of healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs and identify issues in organizational systems.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN and the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Formulates a differential diagnosis based on the assessment, history, physical examination, and diagnostic test results.

Standard 3: Outcomes Identification

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN identify expected outcomes for a plan that is individualized to the healthcare consumer or the situation involving wound, ostomy, and/or continence care issues.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Engages the healthcare consumer, the interprofessional team, and others in partnership to identify expected outcomes for wound, ostomy, and/or continence concerns.
- Formulates culturally sensitive, expected outcomes derived from assessments and diagnoses for the person with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Uses clinical expertise and current evidence-based practice to identify health risks, benefits, costs, and/or the expected trajectory of a particular wound, ostomy, or continence condition. *Example:* Utilizes the WOCN Society's evidence-based, clinical practice guidelines and best practice resources in formulating expected outcomes for a patient with diabetes mellitus and a wound due to lower-extremity neuropathic disease to identify the expected trajectory, health risks, benefits, and costs associated with the condition.
- Collaborates with the healthcare consumer to define and advocate for expected outcomes, which integrate/reflect the healthcare consumer's culture, values, and ethical concerns.
- Develops expected outcomes that facilitate coordination of care for the person with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs across the continuum of care.

- Integrates scientific evidence and best practices in wound, ostomy, and/or continence care to achieve expected outcomes. *Example:* Identifies leakage of ostomy pouching systems and characteristics of ostomy output that are contrary to expected outcomes.
- Generates a time frame for attainment of expected outcomes in wound, ostomy, and/or continence care. *Example:* Identifies delayed wound healing of a stage 3 pressure ulcer/injury based on guidelines for expected healing rates or times for full-thickness wounds due to pressure.
- Documents expected outcomes as measurable goals.
- Evaluates the actual outcomes in relation to expected outcomes, safety, and quality standards. *Example:* Develops a process for ongoing evaluation of patients after removal of indwelling urinary catheters to decrease the incidence of catheter-associated urinary tract infections.
- Modifies expected outcomes based on an evaluation of the status of the healthcare consumer's; medical, environmental, and psychosocial needs; and the wound, ostomy, and/or continence issues.
- Advocates for outcomes that reflect the healthcare consumer's culture, values, and ethical concerns.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN and the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Define expected outcomes that incorporate cost and clinical effectiveness and are aligned with the outcomes identified by members of the interprofessional team for individuals with complex wounds, continence issues, and/or ostomy challenges.
- Differentiate outcomes that require care process interventions from those that require system-level actions. *Example:* Lead projects to decrease the incidence of facility-acquired pressure ulcers/injuries such as reviewing pressure redistribution surfaces and replacing them, as needed, across settings in a large, multicenter institution.

Standard 4: Planning

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN develop plans for wound, ostomy, and/or continence care that prescribe strategies to attain expected, measurable outcomes.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Develops a focused, individualized, holistic, evidence-based plan in partnership with the healthcare consumer and the interprofessional team to address wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Establishes plan priorities with the healthcare consumer and the interprofessional team.
- Includes evidence-based strategies in the plan to address the identified diagnoses, problems, or issues as they relate to wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs. These strategies may include, but are not limited to:
 - Promotion and restoration of health
 - Prevention of illness, injury, and disease
 - Facilitation of healing
 - Alleviation of suffering

- Provision of supportive care
- Promotion of autonomy
- Advocates for responsible and appropriate use of interventions to minimize unwarranted or unwanted treatment and/or suffering of the healthcare consumer. *Example:* Contacts the primary healthcare provider to write letters of necessity for services, equipment, or supplies that are needed for management of wound, ostomy, and/or continence issues.
- Prioritizes elements of the plan based on the assessment of the healthcare consumer's level of risk and safety needs.
- Incorporates an implementation pathway that describes steps and milestones.
- Identifies the cost and economic implications of the plan so that wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs of the healthcare consumer are met. *Example:* Considers costs and availability of supplies when developing a plan to correct issues with ostomy leakage, wound care dressings, or continence care needs.
- Develops a plan that reflects compliance with current statutes, rules, regulations, and standards.
- Modifies the plan according to the ongoing assessment of the healthcare consumer's response and other outcome indicators.
- Documents the plan using standardized language or recognized terminology. *Example:* Coordinates updates/modifications in the electronic health record related to wound, ostomy, and/or continence care issues as needed.
- Designs strategies and tactics to meet the multifaceted and complex needs of healthcare consumers or others.
- Designs innovative nursing practices for the care of individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Develops comprehensive, holistic plans of care that monitor and address the health promotion and disease prevention needs of healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN:

- Actively participates in the development and continuous improvement of systems that support the planning process.
- Leads the design and development of interprofessional processes to address the identified diagnoses, problems, or issues.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN and the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Integrates assessment strategies, diagnostic strategies, and therapeutic interventions that reflect current evidence-based knowledge and practice. *Example:* Develops a plan of care that utilizes pharmacologic and behavioral modalities to manage altered fecal or urinary elimination patterns to optimize outcomes and enhance the individual's quality of life.

Standard 5: Implementation

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN implement identified wound, ostomy, and/or continence care plans.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Partners with the healthcare consumer with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs to implement the plan in a safe, effective, efficient, timely, patient-centered, and equitable manner.^{39,40}
- Integrates interprofessional team partners in implementation of the wound, ostomy, and/or continence care plan through collaboration, communication, and consultation across the continuum of care.
- Demonstrates caring behaviors to develop therapeutic relationships with individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.
- Provides culturally congruent, holistic care that focuses on the healthcare consumer with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs and addresses and advocates for the needs of this diverse population across the life span.
- Uses evidence-based interventions and strategies to achieve the mutually identified goals and outcomes specific to the problem or needs of the healthcare consumer with wound, ostomy, and/or continence concerns. *Example:* Uses clinical practice guidelines published by the WOCN Society and other groups to guide care of the patient with a wound (eg, clinical practice guidelines for management either of wounds due to pressure ulcer/injury or of venous, arterial, or neuropathic disease).
- Integrates critical thinking and technology solutions to implement the nursing process to collect, measure, record, retrieve, trend, and analyze data and information to enhance nursing practice and outcomes for the healthcare consumer with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.
- Delegates according to the health, safety, and welfare of the healthcare consumer considering the circumstance, person, task, direction or communication, supervision, evaluation, state nurse practice act regulations, institutional policies, and requirements of regulatory entities, while maintaining accountability for the wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Documents implementation of and any modifications, including changes or omissions, in the identified plan.
- Uses systems, organizations, and community resources to lead effective change and implement the plan.
- Applies quality principles while articulating methods, tools, performance measures, and standards as they relate to implementation of the plan.
- Translates evidence into practice.
- Leads interprofessional teams to communicate, collaborate, and consult effectively regarding the care of the individual with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Demonstrates leadership skills that emphasize ethical and critical decision-making, effective working relationships, and a systems perspective.
- Serves as a consultant to provide additional insight into and potential solutions to improve the care and outcomes for individuals with complex clinical cases involving wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs. *Example:* Works with the unit-based team in an acute care setting and/or serves as a consultant to the case managers in a home health setting to manage a

patient with a high volume of highly irritating liquid output from 2 fistulas from the small intestine that are draining into a large, open abdominal wound: sizes, selects, and fits a complex pouching and closed-suction system to contain the drainage; recommends appropriate topical/skin care products to protect the periwound skin and enhance the seal of the pouching system; and educates the staff, patient, and family in the care and management of the system.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the graduate-level prepared RN:

- Uses theory-driven approaches to effect organizational or system changes to meet the needs of healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care problems/issues.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN and the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Uses prescriptive authority, procedures, referrals, treatments, and therapies in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations to provide individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs the necessary equipment and supplies for their care.
- Prescribes traditional and integrative evidence-based treatments, therapies, and procedures that are compatible with the healthcare consumer's cultural preferences and norms.
- Prescribes evidence-based pharmacological agents, treatments, supplies, and durable medical equipment according to clinical indicators and results of diagnostic and laboratory tests.

Standard 5A: Coordination of Care

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN coordinate care delivery.

Competencies

The WOC RN and the WOC graduate-level prepared RN:

- Organize the components of the plan.
- Collaborate with healthcare consumers in managing their healthcare based on mutual agreement of the outcomes related to the wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Manage a healthcare consumer's care in order to reach the outcomes that were mutually agreed on.
- Engage healthcare consumers in self-care to achieve preferred goals for quality of life.
- Assist healthcare consumers to identify options for care related to their wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Communicate with the healthcare consumer, interprofessional team, and community-based resources to effect safe transitions in continuity of care. *Example:* Communicate/collaborate with the patient, the primary healthcare provider, interprofessional team members, and other care providers to identify potential causes of fecal or urinary incontinence; and develop and implement strat-

egies to improve patients' quality of life as they transition from one healthcare setting to another.

- Advocate for the delivery of dignified and holistic care by the interprofessional team.
- Provide leadership in the coordination of interprofessional healthcare for integrated delivery of services to achieve safe, quality, effective, efficient, timely, patient-centered, and equitable care.^{39,40}
- Document the coordination of care for the healthcare consumer with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN and the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Manages identified consumer panels or populations with needs or concerns related to wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Serves as the provider of wound, ostomy, and/or continence specialty healthcare services in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations.
- Synthesizes data and information to prescribe and provide necessary system and community support measures, including modifications of environments for individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.

Standard 5B: Health Teaching and Health Promotion

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN employ strategies to promote health and a safe environment.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Provides opportunities for the healthcare consumer to identify needs/topics for education in healthcare promotion, disease prevention, and self-management.
- Uses health promotion and health teaching methods, in collaboration with the healthcare consumer, that are appropriate to the situation and the healthcare consumer's values, beliefs, health practices, developmental level, learning needs, readiness and ability to learn, language preference, spirituality, culture, and socioeconomic status. *Example:* Develops educational materials for individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Uses feedback and evaluations from the healthcare consumer to determine the effectiveness of the employed strategies.
- Uses technologies to communicate health promotion and disease prevention information to the healthcare consumer.
- Provides healthcare consumers with evidence-based information about intended effects and potential adverse effects of the plan of care.
- Engages consumer alliance and advocacy groups in health teaching and health promotion activities for healthcare consumers. *Example:* Organizes and/or participates in community support groups for individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.

- Provides anticipatory guidance to healthcare consumers to promote health and prevent or reduce the risk of negative health outcomes.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN and the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Synthesize empirical evidence on risk behaviors, gender roles, learning theories, behavioral change theories, motivational theories, translational theories for evidence-based practice, epidemiology, and other related theories and frameworks when designing health education information and programs for the healthcare consumer with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Evaluate health information resources for applicability, accuracy, readability, and comprehensibility to help healthcare consumers have access to quality health information.
- Incorporate theories and research in generating teaching and counseling strategies to promote and preserve health and healthy lifestyles in populations with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.

Standard 6: Evaluation

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN evaluate progress toward attainment of goals and outcomes.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Conducts a holistic, systematic, ongoing, and criterion-based evaluation of the goals and outcomes in relation to the structure, processes, and timeline prescribed in the plan.
- Collaborates with the healthcare consumer and others who are involved in the care or situation throughout the evaluation process regarding wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Determines, in partnership with the healthcare consumer and other stakeholders, the patient-centeredness, effectiveness, efficiency, safety, timeliness, and equitability³⁹ of the strategies in relation to the responses to the plan and attainment of outcomes for wound, ostomy, and/or continence care. Other defined criteria may also be used.
- Uses ongoing assessment data to revise the diagnoses, outcomes, plan, and implementation strategies.
- Shares evaluation data and conclusions with the healthcare consumer and other stakeholders in accordance with federal and state regulations.
- Documents the results of the evaluation.
- Recommends process, policy, procedure, or protocol revisions related to wound, ostomy, and/or continence care when warranted.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN and the WOC advanced practice WOC nurse:

- Synthesize evaluation data from the healthcare consumer, community, population, and/or institution to determine the effectiveness of the plan.

- Engage in a systematic evaluation process to revise the plan to enhance its effectiveness.
- Use results of the evaluation to make or recommend process, policy, procedure, or protocol revisions when warranted.

Standards of Professional Performance

Standard 7: Ethics

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN practice ethically.

Competencies

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Integrate the *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements*⁵ and the WOCN Society's Code of Ethics²⁴ to guide nursing practice and articulate the moral foundation of nursing.
- Practice with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of all people.
- Advocate for healthcare consumers' rights to informed decision-making and self-determination.
- Seek guidance in situations where the rights of the individual conflict with public health guidelines.
- Endorse the understanding that the primary commitment is to the healthcare consumer regardless of setting or situation.
- Maintain therapeutic relationships and professional boundaries.
- Advocate for the rights, health, and safety of the healthcare consumer and others.
- Safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of data and information from healthcare consumers and others within ethical, legal, and regulatory parameters.
- Demonstrate professional accountability and responsibility for nursing practice.
- Maintain competence through continued personal and professional development. *Example:* Participate in life-long learning, certification, and recertification to enhance professional growth.
- Demonstrate commitment to self-reflection and self-care.
- Contribute to the establishment and maintenance of an ethical environment that is conducive to safe, quality healthcare.
- Advance the profession through scholarly inquiry, development of professional standards, and generation of policy. *Example:* Develop system-wide policies for prevention of pressure ulcers/injuries.
- Collaborate with other healthcare professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, enhance cultural sensitivity and congruence, and reduce health disparities.
- Articulate nursing values to maintain personal integrity and the integrity of the profession.
- Integrate principles of social justice into nursing and policy.
- Evaluate ethical decision-making related to WOC nursing from a personal and organizational perspective.
- Demonstrate ethical behavior in scholarly endeavors and relationships with industry.

Standard 8: Culturally Congruent Practice

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN practice in a manner that is congruent with cultural diversity and inclusion principles.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Demonstrates respect, equity, and empathy in actions and interactions with all healthcare consumers.
- Participates in lifelong learning to understand cultural preferences, worldview, choices, and decision-making processes of diverse healthcare consumers.
- Creates an inventory of one's own values, beliefs, and cultural heritage.
- Applies knowledge of variations in health beliefs, practices, and communication patterns to WOC nursing practice, with a focus on the beliefs and behaviors that affect wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs. *Example:* Recognizes cultural patterns such as a patriarchal family system in which males hold primary power in making healthcare decisions that may affect wound, ostomy, and/or continence care of the other family members.
- Identifies the stage of the healthcare consumer's acculturation and accompanying patterns of needs and engagement.
- Considers the effects and impact of discrimination and oppression on WOC nursing practice within and among vulnerable, cultural groups.
- Uses skills and tools that are appropriately vetted for the culture, literacy, and language of the population served.
- Communicates with appropriate language and behaviors, including the use of medical interpreters and translators in accordance with the healthcare consumer's preferences. *Example:* Develops or uses teaching tools for wound, ostomy, and/or continence care instructions that are published in an appropriate language for the individual.
- Identifies the cultural-specific meaning of interactions, terms, and content as they relate to healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs. *Example:* Considers the impact of an individual's religious or cultural beliefs on his or her healthcare status, such as adjustments to ostomy surgery.
- Respects the healthcare consumer's decisions based on age, tradition, belief and family influence, and stage of acculturation.
- Advocates for policies that promote health and prevent harm among culturally diverse, underserved, or underrepresented healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Promotes equal access to services, tests, interventions, health promotion programs, enrollment in research, education, and other opportunities.
- Educates nurse colleagues and other professionals about cultural similarities and differences of healthcare consumers, families, groups, communities, and populations who have wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs. *Example:* Participates in professional education of future wound, ostomy, and/or continence

care nurses by serving as a clinical preceptor for 1 or more of the WOCN Society's accredited WOC nursing education programs.

- Collaborates with the interprofessional team to identify the cultural and language needs of the healthcare consumer.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN:

- Evaluates tools, instruments, and services provided to culturally diverse populations.
- Advances organizational policies, programs, services, and practices that reflect respect, equity, and values for diversity and inclusion.
- Engages healthcare consumers, key stakeholders, and others in designing and establishing internal and external cross-cultural partnerships to enhance the care of individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Conducts research to improve health care and outcomes for culturally diverse healthcare consumers.
- Develops recruitment and retention strategies to achieve a multicultural workforce.
- Leads interprofessional teams to identify the cultural and language needs of the healthcare consumer.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN and the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Promotes shared decision-making for solutions in planning, prescribing, and evaluating processes of care when the healthcare consumer's cultural preferences and norms may be incompatible with evidence-based practice.

Standard 9: Communication

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN communicate effectively in all areas of wound, ostomy, and/or continence practice.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Assesses one's own communication skills and effectiveness.
- Demonstrates cultural empathy when communicating.
- Assesses communication ability, health literacy, resources, and preferences of healthcare consumers to inform the interprofessional team and others. *Example:* Develops patient teaching literature for wound, ostomy, or continence care at the fifth-grade reading level.
- Uses language translation resources to ensure effective communication.
- Incorporates appropriate alternative strategies to communicate effectively with healthcare consumers who have visual, speech, language, or communication difficulties.
- Uses communication styles and methods that demonstrate caring, respect, deep listening, authenticity, and trust when addressing healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Conveys accurate information regarding holistic wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Maintains communication with the interprofessional team and others to facilitate safe transitions and

continuity in delivery of wound, ostomy, and/or continence care across the continuum of care.

- Contributes WOC nursing's perspective in interactions and discussions with the interprofessional team.
- Exposes care processes and decisions when they do not appear to be in the best interest of the healthcare consumer.
- Discloses concerns related to potential or actual hazards and errors in care or the practice environment to the appropriate administrative leader.
- Demonstrates continuous improvement of communication skills.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN and the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Assume leadership roles in shaping or fashioning environments that promote healthy communication.

Standard 10: Collaboration

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN collaborate with the healthcare consumer and other key stakeholders in the conduct of wound, ostomy, and/or continence nursing practice.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Identifies areas of expertise and contributions of other professionals and key stakeholders.
- Clearly articulates the WOC nurse's role and responsibilities within the team.
- Uses the unique and complementary abilities of all team members to optimize attainment of desired outcomes for healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.
- Partners with the healthcare consumer and key stakeholders to advocate for and effect change, leading to positive outcomes and quality care for individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs. *Example:* Advocates for legislative changes in financial coverage of compression stockings for lymphedema treatment.
- Uses appropriate tools and techniques, including information systems and technologies, to facilitate discussion and team functions in a manner that protects dignity, respect, privacy, and confidentiality for individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.
- Promotes engagement through consensus building and conflict management.
- Uses effective group dynamics and strategies to enhance team performance.
- Exhibits dignity and respect when interacting with others and giving and receiving feedback.
- Partners with all stakeholders to create, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive plan.
- Participates in interprofessional activities (eg, education, consultation, management, technological development, research) to enhance outcomes in wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN and the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Provide leadership for establishing, improving, and sustaining collaborative relationships to ensure the safety and quality of care for healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.
- Advance interprofessional plan-of-care documentation and communications, rationales for plan-of-care changes, and collaborative discussions to improve outcomes for healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.

Standard 11: Leadership

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN lead within the professional practice setting and the profession of WOC nursing.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Contributes to the establishment of an environment that supports and maintains respect, trust, and dignity.
- Encourages innovation in WOC nursing practice and role performance to attain personal and professional plans, goals, and vision.
- Communicates to manage change and address conflict.
- Mentors colleagues for the advancement of WOC nursing practice and the profession to enhance the safety and quality of wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Retains accountability for delegated wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Contributes to the evolution of WOC nursing practice through participation in professional organizations.
- Influences policy to promote the health of healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.
- Models expert WOC nursing practice to interprofessional team members and healthcare consumers.
- Enhances the effectiveness of the interprofessional team.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN:

- Influences decision-making bodies to improve the professional practice environment for WOC nursing and outcomes for healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.
- Mentors colleagues in the acquisition of advanced clinical knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment.
- Provides leadership in developing care models that manage chronic care issues related to wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN and the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Promotes advanced practice nursing and role development by interpreting the WOC advanced practice RN's role for healthcare consumers and policy makers related to wound, ostomy, and/or continence care. *Example:* The WOC advanced practice RN advocates for facility/organizational privileging and reimbursement under Medicare and other payer models.

Standard 12: Education

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN seek knowledge and competence that reflect current nursing practice and promote futuristic thinking in wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.

Competencies

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Identify learning needs based on nursing knowledge and the various roles that WOC nurses may assume.
- Participate in ongoing educational activities related to nursing including WOC nursing and interprofessional knowledge bases and professional topics.
- Mentor nurses who are new to their WOC nursing roles for the purpose of ensuring successful enculturation, orientation, and emotional support.
- Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning through self-reflection and inquiry for learning and personal growth.
- Seek experiences that reflect current practice to maintain and advance knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and judgment in wound, ostomy, and/or continence clinical practice or WOC nursing role performance.
- Acquire knowledge and skills relative to the role, population, specialty, setting, and local or global health situation.
- Participate in formal consultations or informal discussions to address issues in WOC nursing practice as an application of education and knowledge.
- Identify modifications or accommodations needed in the delivery of wound, ostomy, and/or continence care and education based on the needs of the healthcare consumer and family members.
- Share educational findings, experiences, and ideas with peers.
- Support acculturation of nurses who are new to their roles by role modeling, encouraging, and sharing pertinent information relative to the delivery of optimal wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Facilitate a work environment supportive of ongoing education of healthcare professionals.
- Maintain a professional portfolio that provides evidence of individual competence and lifelong learning in wound, ostomy, and/or continence care. *Example:* Development of a professional growth program portfolio of professional and continuing educational activities related to wound, ostomy, and/or continence practice to submit to the WOCNCB for recertification.

Standard 13: Evidence-Based Practice and Research

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN integrate evidence and research findings into wound, ostomy, and/or continence practice.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Articulates the values of research and its application relative to the healthcare setting and wound, ostomy, and/or continence practice.

- Identifies questions in the healthcare setting and WOC nursing practice that can be answered by nursing research.
- Uses current evidence-based knowledge, including research findings, to guide WOC nursing practice in all settings.
- Incorporates evidence when initiating changes in WOC nursing practice.
- Participates in the formulation of evidence-based practice in wound, ostomy, and/or continence care through research.
- Promotes ethical principles of research in practice and the healthcare setting.
- Appraises nursing research for optimal application to the practice of wound, ostomy, and/or continence nursing and to the healthcare setting.
- Shares peer-reviewed research findings regarding wound, ostomy, and/or continence care with colleagues to integrate new knowledge into nursing practice.
- Disseminates evidence-based practice and research findings in wound, ostomy, and/or continence care through varied activities: presentations, publications, consultations, process improvement projects, and participation in journal clubs.
- Integrates current wound, ostomy, and/or continence research findings and other evidence to improve the quality of nursing practice; expand knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment; enhance role performance; and increase knowledge of professional issues. *Example:* Utilizes evidence- and consensus-based algorithms to select support surfaces for adults with/or at risk for pressure ulcers/injuries^{41,42} and to select compression for primary prevention, treatment, and prevention of recurrence of venous leg ulcers.⁴³
- Develops evidence-based educational programs to improve and standardize the delivery of wound, ostomy, and/or continence care. *Example:* Serves as a course coordinator to oversee the delivery of a wound treatment associate educational program to promote evidence-based wound care by nonspecialty nurses.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN and the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Use critical thinking skills to connect theory and research to WOC nursing practice.
- Contribute to nursing knowledge by conducting or synthesizing research and other evidence that discovers, examines, and evaluates current practice, knowledge, theories, criteria, and creative approaches to improve wound, ostomy, and/or continence care outcomes.
- Encourage other nurses to develop research skills.
- Perform rigorous critique of evidence derived from databases to generate meaningful evidence for nursing practice.
- Advocate for the ethical conduct and translation of research with particular attention to the protection of the healthcare consumer as a research participant.
- Promote a climate of collaborative research and clinical inquiry.

Standard 14: Quality of Practice

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN contribute to quality WOC nursing practice.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Ensures that WOC nursing practice is safe, effective, efficient, equitable, timely, and patient-centered.^{39,40,44}
- Identifies barriers and opportunities to improve health-care safety, effectiveness, efficiency, equitability, timeliness, and patient-centeredness.
- Recommends strategies to improve nursing quality in wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Uses creativity and innovation to enhance WOC nursing care.
- Provides leadership in the design of quality improvement initiatives.
- Participates in the implementation of quality improvement projects. *Example:* Facilitates audits for collection of data regarding hospital-acquired pressure ulcers/injuries for the Nursing Database of Nursing Quality Indicators.
- Collects data to monitor the quality of WOC nursing practice.
- Contributes to efforts to improve healthcare efficiency while attaining positive outcomes.
- Provides critical review and/or evaluation of policies, procedures, and guidelines to improve the quality of wound, ostomy, and/or continence care. *Example:* Based on a review of current policies, procedures, and guidelines, develops a new product formulary and a standardized care plan for selection and utilization of incontinence care products.
- Engages in formal and informal peer-review processes.
- Collaborates with the interprofessional team to implement quality improvement plans and interventions to enhance wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Documents nursing practice in a manner that supports quality and performance improvement initiatives.
- Achieves certification in wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Analyzes trends in healthcare quality data, including examination of cultural influences and factors.
- Designs innovations to improve outcomes related to wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Promotes a practice environment that supports evidence-based wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Engages in development, implementation, evaluation, and/or revision of policies, procedures, and guidelines to improve the quality of wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN:

- Contributes to nursing and interprofessional knowledge through scientific inquiry.
- Uses data and information in system-level decision-making that influences wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Influences the organizational system to improve outcomes.
- Designs quality improvement studies, research initiatives, and other programs/projects to improve health outcomes in diverse settings.
- Applies knowledge obtained from advanced preparation, current research, and evidence-based information to clinical decision-making at the point of care to

achieve optimal health outcomes in wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.

- Uses available benchmarks as a means to evaluate practice at the individual, departmental, or organizational level.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN and the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Engages in comparison evaluations of the effectiveness and efficacy of diagnostic tests, clinical procedures, therapies, and treatment plans and in partnerships with healthcare consumers to optimize health and healthcare quality for individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs.

Standard 15: Professional Practice Evaluation

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN evaluate their own WOC nursing practice and the nursing practice of others.

Competencies

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Engage in self-reflection and self-evaluation of nursing practice on a regular basis to identify areas of strength and areas in which professional growth would be beneficial. *Example:* Analyze WOC nursing practice initiatives to determine which activities qualify for inclusion in the professional growth program portfolio for recertification or require further development.
- Adhere to the guidance about professional practice as specified in the *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*⁴ and the *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements*.⁵
- Ensure that WOC nursing practice is consistent with regulatory requirements pertaining to licensure, relevant statutes, rules, and regulations.
- Use organizational policies and procedures and the WOCN Society's *Professional Practice Manual*⁶ to guide WOC nursing professional practice.
- Influence organizational policies and procedures to promote interprofessional, evidence-based practice.
- Provide evidence for WOC nursing practice decisions and actions as part of the formal and informal evaluation processes.
- Seek formal and informal feedback regarding their own WOC nursing practice from healthcare consumers, peers, colleagues, supervisors, and others.
- Provide peers and others with formal and informal constructive feedback regarding their practice or role performance.
- Take action to achieve goals identified during the evaluation process.

Standard 16: Resource Utilization

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN utilize appropriate resources to plan, provide, and sustain evidence-based WOC nursing services that are safe, effective, and fiscally responsible.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Assesses the healthcare consumer's wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs and the available resources to achieve the desired outcomes.
- Assists the healthcare consumer to factor in costs, risks, and benefits in decisions about care.
- Assists the healthcare consumer in identifying and securing appropriate services to address wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs across the healthcare continuum.
- Delegates in accordance with applicable legal and policy parameters.
- Identifies the impact of resource allocation on the potential for harm, complexity of the task, and desired outcomes.
- Advocates for resources that support and enhance WOC nursing practice.
- Integrates telehealth and mobile health technologies into practice to promote positive interactions between healthcare consumers and care providers.
- Engages organizational and community resources to formulate and implement interprofessional plans.
- Addresses discriminatory healthcare practices and the impact on allocation of resources for wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Designs innovative solutions to use resources effectively and maintain quality in wound, ostomy, and/or continence care. *Example:* Develops a flowchart/diagram to guide selection of wound care products based on characteristics of the wound.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN and the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Create evaluation strategies that address cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, and efficiency factors associated with wound, ostomy, and/or continence nursing practice.
- Assume complex and advanced leadership roles to initiate and guide change in the delivery of wound, ostomy, and/or continence care.
- Analyze the outcomes of care to make recommendations for improvements in care delivery systems for populations with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs.

Standard 17: Environmental Health

The WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN, and the WOC advanced practice RN practice in an environmentally safe and healthy manner.

Competencies

The WOC RN:

- Promotes a safe and healthy workplace and professional practice environment.
- Uses environmental health concepts in practice.
- Assesses the environment to identify risk factors.
- Reduces environmental health risks to self, colleagues, and healthcare consumers.
- Communicates information about environmental health risks and strategies to reduce exposure to the risks.
- Advocates for the safe, judicious, and appropriate use and disposal of products in healthcare.

- Incorporates technologies to promote safe practice environments.
- Uses products or treatments consistent with evidence-based practice to reduce environmental threats.
- Participates in developing strategies to promote healthy communities and practice environments.

In addition to the competencies of the WOC RN, the WOC graduate-level prepared RN and the WOC advanced practice RN:

- Analyze the impact of social, political, and economic influences on the global environment and human health experience.
- Create partnerships that promote sustainable, global, and environmental health policies and conditions that focus on prevention of hazards to people and the natural environment

SUMMARY

The specialty of WOC nursing is a continually evolving practice that changes with the healthcare landscape. WOC nursing affects the care of healthcare consumers with wound, ostomy, and/or continence needs in all healthcare settings through multiple activities: integration of evidence-based practices to achieve positive clinical outcomes; education of healthcare consumers and their families/caregivers; interprofessional collaboration, communication, and coordination of care; research; and public policy and advocacy efforts. *The Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 2nd Edition*³ provides a valuable resource for WOC nurses in making decisions and when expanding, validating, or analyzing their professional/specialty roles and practice.²

This Executive Summary describes the process for developing the updated scope and standards document; provided a brief overview of the scope of WOC nursing practice (ie, definition and description of WOC nursing and the trispecialty practice; educational preparation and levels of WOC nurse providers; certification for WOC nursing; ethics in WOC nursing; current issues, trends, challenges, and future considerations for WOC nursing); and listed the standards of professional practice

KEY POINTS

- WOC nursing has a rich history of discovery, innovation, creativity, excellence, and devotion to the care and management of individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence problems.
- The recognition of WOC nursing as a specialty nursing practice has helped validate the contributions of WOC nursing to the healthcare delivery system in the United States.
- As clinicians, educators, consultants, researchers, and administrators, WOC nurses play pivotal roles in providing optimal care to individuals with wound, ostomy, and/or continence care needs of all ages and in all healthcare settings.
- WOC nurses choose the specialty as their life's work because they are drawn to the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives on a daily basis by helping individuals to manage wound, ostomy, and/or continence issues.

and performance along with the competencies for each level of WOC nurse provider. For additional information, refer to the full version of the *Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 2nd Edition*,³ which is available from the WOCN Society's online book store (www.wocn.org). The full version includes greater detail and exemplars that reflect the application of the scope and standards of practice and the code of ethics in WOC specialty nursing practice.

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