

## Clinical Nurse Specialist

### ■ Job Description

A clinical nurse specialist is a registered nurse who has completed a master's degree in a specialized area of nursing practice and competence. Within the broad area of *medical-surgical nursing*, there are many specialty areas, including burn care, cardiopulmonary, diabetes care, metabolic care, neurological, oncology, rehabilitation, renal, and trauma nursing. The umbrella of *maternal-child health nursing* includes specialties in adolescent health, developmental disabilities, family, handicapped children, midwifery, neonatal, pediatric oncology, pediatric pulmonary, perinatal, and school health nursing. *Psychiatric-mental health nursing* includes the areas of child mental health, chronic mental illness, community mental health, stress disorders, and substance abuse. *Other major program areas* include anesthesiology, community health, cross cultural nursing, family nursing in the urban community, home health care, hospice nursing, occupational health, research, and women's health.

### ■ Job Settings

Although most nurses work in hospitals, clinical specialists may also be found in private institutions, nursing homes, public health organizations, religious and missionary associations, insurance companies, industry, management consulting firms, boards of health and education, educational institutions, HMOs, home health care agencies, and private practice.

### ■ Projected Need

Nationally, the number of jobs for registered nurses is expected to increase faster than average through 2010. In Illinois, registered nurse is one of the 10 occupations expected to provide the most job openings each year. Growth in this occupation will be due in part to technological advances that allow more medical problems to be treated. In addition, the number of older people is expected to increase rapidly. Older people are more likely to need medical care.

The number of jobs in hospital nursing is expected to grow more slowly than in other settings. This is because patients are being released earlier from

hospitals. Rapid growth is expected in home health care and nursing homes.

Specialized knowledge and skills are essential for quality patient care management in today's health care industry. Opportunities should be excellent for nurses with advanced education and training.

### ■ Salaries

Salaries are competitive and vary widely depending on place of employment, scope of practice, education, and experience. According to a National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists survey, median earnings of clinical nurse specialists were \$59,114 per year in 2000. With two to four years of clinical experience earnings averaged \$47,374 per year. Clinical nurse specialists working in supervisory positions received an annual wage of \$67,191.

According to the Year 2000 Survey of Registered Nurses in Illinois, 59.7% of clinical nurse specialists surveyed reported earning between \$50,000 and \$75,000 per year.

### ■ Related Careers

Clinical nurse specialists also work as administrators and educators. Continuing education, consultation, middle management, nursing health policy, staff development, public policy planning, and research are related career roles.

### ■ Differences in Training

Length of master's programs nationally varies from four to eight quarters and from two to six semesters. Almost all programs require applicants to be registered nurses with baccalaureate degrees. Most programs award a Master of Science (MS) or a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN). Other degrees awarded are Master of Nursing (MN), Master of Arts (MA), Master of Public Health (MPH), and Master of Nursing Science (MNS).

### ■ Related Educational Programs

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

*The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/> You must log into CIS prior to clicking on the links below.*

[Adult Health Nursing](#)

[Maternal and Child Health Nursing](#)

[Maternal and Child Public Health](#)

[Mental Health Nursing](#)

[Nurse Anesthetist](#)

[Nurse Midwifery](#)

[Nurse Practitioner](#)

[Nursing Science](#)

[Pediatric Nursing](#)

[Public Health Nursing](#)

[Registered Nursing](#)

[Surgical Nursing](#)

## ■ **Credentials**

Licensing as an advanced practice nurse is required from the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation for certified clinical nurse specialists. Licensing requirements include a current Illinois registered nurse license; approved current national certification in the specialty; and successful completion of a master's program.

## ■ **Advanced Training**

The clinical nurse specialist is an advanced practice role in nursing. Some nurses may continue their education to receive a doctoral degree in nursing. Roles for nurses with doctorates include teaching in a university setting or conducting research in nursing.

## ■ **Resources**

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