

Reference Hearing Proposal

SUBJECT: PDA Use in Nursing

SUBMITTED BY: COUNCIL ON NURSING INFORMATICS

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PROPOSAL:

1 **Statement of the Issue:** The advent of
2 handheld technology has facilitated access to
3 up-to-date clinical information for healthcare
4 providers where it is needed most—at the
5 point of care. By adopting this technology,
6 nurses can empower their practice by
7 providing high quality care based on current
8 information and resources. When nurses have
9 up-to-the-minute, patient specific information,
10 care is more likely to be appropriate, timely,
11 effective, efficient and safe.

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13 The Personal Digital Assistant, or “PDA”, is
14 one type of compact handheld device. Using
15 direct computer access or wireless networks,
16 PDAs provide for information processing,
17 retrieval and archiving as well as for
18 communication. PDAs are increasingly used
19 to manage patient information in inpatient and
20 outpatient settings, in healthcare research,
21 home care nursing, and in clinical patient
22 documentation and ordering systems.
23 Preparation of nurses increasingly includes
24 information and communication skills as key
25 curricular elements. PDAs are useful cost-
26 effective devices that facilitate the information
27 and knowledge functions of the nurse.

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29 Information management is a significant
30 component of the nursing role; adoption of
31 PDA technology in nursing practice provides
32 many benefits. PDAs store, organize, process
33 and permit instant retrieval of important
34 clinical and business information. PDAs
35 replace bulky reference note cards and
36 outdated manuals. PDAs move policies,
37 references, and standards of care from the
38 shelf into the hands of nurses at the bedside, in
39 the office, and in the home.
40 Plentiful business and clinical applications are
41 available for the PDA. Many of these

42 applications are free or at low cost and may be
43 downloaded from the Internet.

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45 The cost of a PDA is equivalent to one or two
46 up-to-date textbooks, a journal subscription, or
47 a high quality stethoscope. The portability,
48 ease of use, and ready access to
49 communication and information management
50 tools allowed by the PDA is certainly less
51 expensive than desktop or laptop computers.

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53 Nurses as a group have been comparatively
54 slow to adopt PDAs into their practice. A
55 primary reason for the lag in adopting PDAs is
56 lack of awareness of their potential uses in
57 healthcare and scarce resources (money and
58 time). In order to guide future technological
59 development of these valuable tools and
60 applications, nurses in all settings must
61 communicate their specific and unique needs
62 for information management to
63 manufacturer’s and developers. In addition to
64 developing nursing focused software,
65 organizations should consider strategies to
66 defray some of the expenses related to
67 purchasing and maintaining these devices.

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69 The awareness of the potential advantages and
70 capabilities of the PDA require a leadership
71 stance that supports the development and
72 deployment of handheld technology at the
73 point of care for nurses.

74 **Recommendation for Action:** NCNA issue a
75 statement informing nurses of the advantages
76 of PDAs and supporting nurses having readily
77 available and up-to-date information at the
78 point of care to enable them to provide high
79 quality patient care. The use of handheld
80 technology and applications is an important
81 adjunct to making this possible.

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1 **Relationship to NCNA Strategic Plan:**

2 **Implementation Activities:**

3 The Council on Nursing Informatics (CoNI)
4 and NCNA will support the adoption of
5 handheld technology by:

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7 a. Developing a draft statement emphasizing
8 the importance of readily accessible,
9 available, accurate data and information for
10 nurses at the point of care.

11 b. Developing a web page supporting Nursing
12 PDA use.

13 c. Developing a poster presentation on
14 Nursing PDA use for display at the NCNA
15 convention.

16 d. Creating an on-line forum for discussing
17 PDA use in Nursing in North Carolina.

18 e. Issue a communication to PDA hardware
19 and software developers identifying nurses
20 as unique users, requesting application
21 development targeting nursing's unique
22 needs and requesting rebates for nurses to
23 make technology adoption affordable.

24 **Fiscal Implications:**

25 Fiscal: Cost of web pages to support handheld
26 information

27 Time: CoNI member time to develop
28 documents and web page content.

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