

## Component 2: The Culture of Health Care

### Unit 3: Health Care Settings— The Places Where Care Is Delivered

#### Lecture 1

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## Unit Objectives

- Understand the range of organizations in the U.S. health care system
- Become familiar with the "continuum of care"
  - Outpatient services
  - Inpatient hospitals
  - Tertiary care clinics (highly specialized care)
  - Long-term-care hospitals
  - Hospice care (end-of-life care)

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## Unit Overview

- Outpatient care clinics: how they operate and how they are organized
  - Also called ambulatory care clinics
- Hospitals in the U.S. health care system: how they are funded, the services they provide, and the different populations they serve
- Nontraditional health care settings and the niches they fill

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## Unit Overview (cont'd)

- The organizational structure of a typical hospital and the roles of key leadership personnel
- The nonclinical departments of a hospital: how they support patient care
- The clinical departments of a hospital: how they work collaboratively to deliver efficient patient care

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## Topics in This Lecture

- Overview of Outpatient Clinics
- Outpatient Clinics as Businesses
- Clinical Personnel in Outpatient Clinics
- Nonclinical Personnel in Outpatient Clinics

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## Introduction to Outpatient Clinics

- Care for patients not requiring hospitalization
- Serve general population or specific groups
- Primary care
- Urgent care
- Specialty care, for example:
  - Cardiology clinics
  - Outpatient surgery centers
  - Diagnostic imaging centers
  - Outpatient rehabilitation clinics

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## The Outpatient Clinic: A Health Care Business

- Ownership
  - Medical professionals (individuals, partnerships, or corporations)
  - Health insurance plans
  - Health management organizations
- Services determined by owner-providers' specialties and interests

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## Physician

- Physician-owner sees patients and manages business operations
- May use clinic for follow-up care of patients from his or her hospital practice
- May bring additional professionals on as partners, or hire them to work as employees of the clinic

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## Nurse Practitioner (NP)

- May be practice partners or owners in some states
- Licensed, independent practitioner
- Primary or specialty care
- Full authority to assess, diagnose, prescribe, and treat
- Not required to have a doctor's supervision
- RN credentials plus master's or doctorate degree, plus continuing medical education

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## Physician Assistant (PA)

- Licensed practitioner working under the supervision of a physician or surgeon
- Not to be confused with a medical assistant
- Primary care and some specialties
- May be principal care provider at rural or inner-city clinics, in consultation with a supervising physician
- Education: College degree, health-related work experience, completion of 2+ years in an accredited program, and licensing exam

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## Registered Nurse (RN)

- Direct patient care and delivery of treatment as ordered by a doctor, NP, or PA
- Patient and family education, advice, and emotional support
- Might supervise other nurses, assistants, aides
- Three typical educational paths
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Associate degree
  - Approved nursing program diploma

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## Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)

- Basic bedside care
  - Monitors vital signs
  - Administers basic treatment
  - Assists with patient comfort, hygiene, mobility
- Might supervise assistants and aides
- High school diploma and 1-year technical or vocational training program

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## Medical Assistant

- Performs support tasks in the clinic
- Administrative
  - Forms, filing, scheduling, billing
- Clinical
  - Takes medical histories and vital signs
  - Handles and prepares laboratory specimens
  - Prepares patients for tests and treatments
  - Draws blood, removes stitches, changes dressings, and performs other basic patient-care tasks
- No formal educational or training requirements
  - Learn on the job or in vocational programs

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## Medical Office Manager

- Oversees administrative functions of the clinic
  - Staffing and personnel
  - Patient relations
  - Medical records
  - Finance
  - Housekeeping and maintenance
- May focus on daily operations, or also play a role in business strategy and policy decisions
- Title and responsibilities vary
- Many have bachelor's degree or advanced degree in health care administration

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## Receptionist and Front Office Staff

- Answer phones, screens and routes calls
- Schedule appointments
- Greet patients
- Prepare and collect patient information forms
- Answer questions
- Perform data entry

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## Coding and Billing Specialist

- Assigns diagnosis and procedure codes to insurance claims according to established classification systems
  - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
  - Insurance companies
- Ensures compliance with federal regulations and insurance requirements
- Assists with preparation and submission of reimbursement claims

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## Medical Records Clerk/ Health Information Technician

- Assembles and organizes patient information for medical records
- Reviews quality and accuracy, clarifies ambiguities or errors
- Maintains electronic medical record system
- Analyzes and reports on health data

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## Medical Transcriptionist

- Transcribes doctor's dictation, for example:
  - Reports on patient visits
  - Reports on surgery and autopsies
  - Referral letters
- Prepares transcriptions from voice recordings, or edits transcriptions generated by voice-recognition software
- Must understand medical terminology and jargon
- Post-high school education preferred, with voluntary certification available
- In-house or outsourced

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## Housekeeping and Maintenance

- Maintains a safe, sanitary, and pleasant environment
- Controls solid, liquid, and biohazardous wastes
- Handles daily and periodic cleaning tasks
- Performs upkeep of facilities and utility systems

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## Summary

- Outpatient clinics care for patients who do not need hospitalization
  - May serve general population or specific groups
  - Provide primary care, urgent care, or specialty care
- Outpatient clinics are structured much like other service businesses
  - Core service providers (medical staff) deliver care to patients
  - Administrative support personnel manage business and operational duties

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