

NURS-FPX4065 Assessment 3 Ethical and Policy Factors in Care Coordination

Student Name

Capella University

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Professor Name

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Ethical and Policy Factors in Care Coordination

Care coordination is shaped by a complex landscape of ethical principles and healthcare policies. These factors influence how care is coordinated, what resources are available, and how providers collaborate to meet patients' needs. This paper examines the ethical and policy factors that influence care coordination, focusing on how policies affect the coordination of care for a community population and how ethical principles guide nurses in navigating these factors to deliver patient-centered care.

Policy Factors Affecting Care Coordination

Numerous policies shape care coordination. The Affordable Care Act expanded access to care and promoted coordinated care models such as accountable care organizations, which incentivize providers to work together to improve outcomes and reduce costs. These models have significant implications for how care is coordinated and how providers collaborate. Policy thus plays a central role in shaping the structures within which care coordination occurs.

Medicare and Medicaid policies influence reimbursement for care coordination services and affect which services patients can access. These policies determine what care coordination activities are funded and what services are available to patients, shaping the resources available for coordination. The HITECH Act promoted the adoption of electronic health records, which support the information sharing essential to coordination.

These policies affect the resources available for care coordination, the structure of care delivery, and the ability of providers to share information and collaborate. Understanding the policy landscape is essential for nurses coordinating care, as it shapes the context within which

they work (McDonald et al., 2014). By understanding relevant policies, nurses can navigate the system effectively and advocate for changes that support better care coordination.

Ethical Considerations in Care Coordination

Care coordination raises important ethical considerations. Respecting patient autonomy requires involving patients in care decisions and honoring their preferences. Care coordination must be patient-centered, ensuring that the patient's values and goals guide the coordination of their care. This respect for autonomy is fundamental to ethical care coordination.

Beneficence and nonmaleficence require coordinating care in ways that promote well-being and avoid harm, such as preventing fragmented or duplicative care. Effective care coordination reduces the risk of harm that can result from gaps, inconsistencies, or duplications in care. Justice requires ensuring equitable access to coordinated care across populations, so that all patients, including the most vulnerable, receive the coordination they need.

The American Nurses Association (2015) Code of Ethics guides nurses in upholding these principles, emphasizing advocacy, respect for patient dignity, and the protection of patient rights throughout the coordination process. By adhering to these ethical principles, nurses ensure that care coordination serves the best interests of patients and respects their rights and dignity. Ethical principles thus provide essential guidance for care coordination.

The Interplay of Ethics and Policy

Ethics and policy are deeply intertwined in care coordination. Policies can either support or hinder ethical practice. For example, policies that expand access to care advance the ethical principle of justice, while gaps in coverage may create ethical dilemmas when patients cannot

access needed services. The relationship between ethics and policy shapes the conditions within which nurses coordinate care.

Privacy policies such as HIPAA protect patient confidentiality, an ethical and legal obligation, while also requiring careful navigation to share information appropriately for coordination. Nurses must balance the obligation to protect patient privacy with the need to share information among providers to coordinate care effectively. This balance illustrates the interplay between ethical principles and policy requirements in care coordination.

Nurses must understand both the ethical principles and the policy context to coordinate care effectively and advocate for their patients. By understanding how ethics and policy interact, nurses can navigate the complexities of care coordination and identify opportunities to advocate for changes that promote ethical, equitable care. This understanding is essential to the nurse's role in care coordination.

The Nurse's Role in Navigating Ethics and Policy

Nurses play a central role in navigating the ethical and policy dimensions of care coordination. As advocates for their patients, nurses work to ensure that care coordination serves patients' interests and respects their rights, even within the constraints of existing policies. This advocacy is an essential component of ethical care coordination.

Nurses also contribute to the development and improvement of policies that affect care coordination. By bringing their frontline perspective to policy discussions, nurses can advocate for policies that support effective, equitable care coordination. This involvement in policy reflects the nurse's broader role in shaping the healthcare system and advancing the interests of patients.

By understanding and navigating the ethical and policy factors that influence care coordination, nurses can provide effective, patient-centered care and advance health equity. The nurse's ability to integrate ethical principles and policy knowledge is essential to coordinating care effectively and to advocating for the changes needed to improve care coordination. This integrative role reflects the complexity and importance of the nurse's contribution to care coordination.

Conclusion

Ethical and policy factors profoundly influence care coordination. Policies shape the resources, structures, and information-sharing capabilities that enable coordination, while ethical principles guide nurses in delivering patient-centered, equitable care. The interplay between ethics and policy shapes the conditions within which care coordination occurs and the challenges that nurses must navigate.

By understanding the interplay of ethics and policy, nurses can navigate the complexities of care coordination, advocate for their patients, and work toward a healthcare system that supports coordinated, ethical care for all. The nurse's ability to integrate ethical principles and policy knowledge is essential to effective care coordination and to the advancement of health equity. Through this integrative role, nurses contribute significantly to the delivery of high-quality, patient-centered care.

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