USA NURSING MINIMUM DATA SET (USA NMDS)
DRAFT

What is the USA NMDS?

The NMDS consists of a minimum set of essential data elements that are necessary to describe clinical nursing practice. Health care information systems, if they are to reflect, support and measure the practice of nurses, must contain elements that reflect the nature of the nursing practice. The USA NMDS consists of a set of 16 data elements intended to be used in all settings where nurses provide care. Initially conceptualized in 1977, the USA NMDS has served as a foundation for the development of nursing minimum data sets throughout the world. Ongoing development and inclusion of essential nursing data into nursing educational programs, health information systems design, and research is needed to ensure the reflection and measure of nursing practice.

Why is the USA NMDS Important?

Use of nursing data is the foundation for defining, communicating and comparing nursing practice. Incorporation of essential nursing data is now even more apparent given the mandate for electronic health record development. Without inclusion of data that reflects the unique focus, judgment, action and outcomes associated with nursing care, staff nurses, supervisors, executives, and policy makers are left without a way to adequately describe and measure the practice. Inclusion of USA NMDS data sets in healthcare information systems can support patient/client care management and the nursing documentation of that care, evaluation of the quality care across settings, improve cost determination and requirements for staffing, and enable research at levels that are presently unimaginable and unmanageable.

Defining USA NMDS Elements

The USA NMDS 16 essential elements are grouped into three broad categories (a) nursing care elements, (b) patient or demographics, and (c) service elements. The aim is to ensure these nursing data elements are contained within healthcare information systems.

Nursing Care Elements: nursing diagnosis, nursing intervention, nursing outcome, and intensity of nursing care

Patient or client demographic elements: personal identification*, date of birth*, sex, race and ethnicity*, residence*

Service elements: unique facility or service agency number*, unique health record number or patient or client*, unique number of principle registered nurse provider, episode admission or encounter date*, discharge or termination date*, disposition of
patient or client, expected payer for most of this bill (anticipated financial guarantor for service)*

*Uniform hospital discharge data set (UHDDS) elements

The openness of the USA NMDS design allows for choice when selecting a nursing classification that best meets an agency’s needs, while at the same time, requires inclusion of nursing data in health care records.

**How can you participate?**

The NMDS work is coordinated through the ICN Accredited Research and Development Center, the Center for Minimum Data Set Knowledge Discovery, located at the University of Minnesota School of Nursing, Minneapolis, MN USA. The Center, with Dr. Connie Delaney Dean & Professor serves as Director and Dr. Bonnie Westra, Assistant Professor serves as Co-Director, provides administrative and resource support for the advancement of the USA NMDS.

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**For Further Information**

ICN Accredited Research and Development Center, Center for Nursing Minimum Data Set Knowledge Discovery  
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