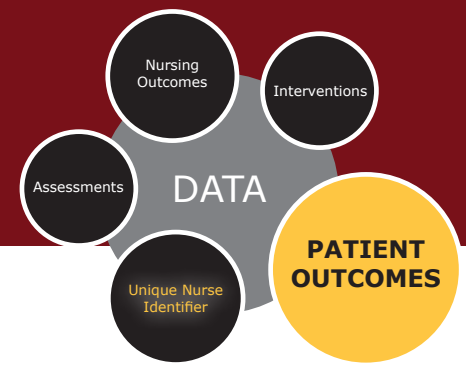


A Unique Nurse Identifier: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



What is the background of the Unique Nurse Identifier?

The Nursing Knowledge: Big Data Science Policy and Advocacy Workgroup, established in 2013, identified the need for a unique nurse identifier. Since then, the workgroup has gained support from national nursing and medical associations, academia, societies, organizations, government agencies, and multiple technology vendors for adoption of a unique nurse identifier.

What is a unique identifier?

A unique identifier (ID) is a distinctive, defined code, or series of characters, that classifies an entity in computer systems, including repositories, registries, data and knowledge bases. In nursing, it is a code that represents the individual nurse and enables identifiable and actionable events in disparate healthcare technology systems.

Why do we need a unique identifier for nurses?

Associating a unique ID with an individual nurse in multiple systems will allow for data matching and capturing a nurse's activity in those system(s) without personally identifiable information. This linking and capturing of data enable identifying nursing events and documentation for research, trending, process improvements and educational purposes.

What is the purpose of a Unique Nurse Identifier?

National and global health systems need to uniquely identify nurses in electronic health records (EHRs), enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, and other technologies for documentation, education, research, and training purposes. The unique identifier can demonstrate the value and contributions of nursing care to improved patient and healthcare outcomes.

What are the benefits of using a Unique Nurse Identifier?

An identifier is essential to the aggregation, synthesis, and publication of data and research that better capture nursing processes to enable scientific inquiry for researchers to measure and quantify nursing care impact on health outcomes. Also, a unique identifier highlights nurse visibility and the value of nursings' role in contributing to safe, effective health practices.

What policy exists for the adoption and use of a Unique Nurse Identifier?

The Nursing Knowledge: Big Data Science Policy and Advocacy Workgroup recommends the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) ID should be used by key stakeholders as a nurse identifier to help demonstrate the value of nursing through research and enhance individual care and health outcomes via more comprehensive documentation in the EHR, ERP, and other technologies and systems. This policy statement has been approved by the Alliance for Nursing Informatics.

What is the NCSBN unique identifier?

The NCSBN ID is a free, unique identifier publicly available and automatically generated and maintained for an individual nurse. Each NCSBN ID is available in the Nursys database. Nursys comprises a suite of systems and databases containing nurse license and license discipline information by leveraging the identifier data provided by state licensure boards of nursing in the U.S. and its territories.

What can nurses do to support the advancement of a Unique Nurse Identifier?

Advocate with your organization and its health IT systems vendors to adopt a Unique Nurse Identifier to demonstrate nurses' value and contributions to safe, quality patient care and health outcomes. For proof-of-concept pilot opportunities to utilize the unique identifier in EHRs, ERP systems, and other technologies, please contact whende@nurseevolution.com.