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GUIDE FOR THE TRAINING OF VOLUNTEER NURSES' AIDES

Attached are Directives or other materials which should be useful to you as a supervisor.

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Prepared by the U. S. Office of Civilian Defense



in collaboration with the American Red Cross

To meet the anticipated need for the expansion of nursing facilities during the period of national emergency, the U. S. Office of Civilian Defense proposed to the American Red Cross in August 1941 that its Volunteer Nurses' Aide Corps be greatly enlarged and that the program be sponsored jointly by both agencies. This challenge was accepted by the Red Cross and the plan for training 100,000 Nurses' Aides is now in progress throughout the United States. In collaboration with the Medical Division of the U. S. Office of Civilian Defense, the curriculum was revised to meet wartime needs, and the course of instruction was reduced to 80 hours to be given in 7 weeks. The first unit of the course (35 hours) is given at the local Red Cross Chapter House or other suitable place, followed by the second unit (45 hours) of supervised practice in a hospital which has been approved as a training center (Syllabus of Course of Instruction, ARC 774).

The purpose of the Nurses' Aide Program is to train a corps of dependable women to serve in wartime as aides to nurses in hospitals and health organizations, and as members of Mobile Medical Teams in the Emergency Medical Service of the Office of Civilian Defense. The Aides always work under the supervision of graduate nurses and, by carrying out many nontechnical procedures, they release nurses for the technical services for which they are prepared.

Nurses are being called daily for service with

the armed forces, leaving hospitals and health organizations seriously understaffed. Volunteer Nurses' Aides have demonstrated that they are able and willing to help. Hospitals and nurses in many communities are enthusiastic about the excellent service which they are giving, and are demanding that their numbers be increased. Nurses' Aides are now serving in Army Hospitals and in hospitals of the Veterans Administration.

The Civilian Defense Volunteer Office, which is established in most local Offices of Civilian Defense, serves as a clearinghouse for all volunteers. Those who are interested in becoming Nurses' Aides and who can meet the requirements in regard to age, education, and availability are referred by this office to the local Red Cross Chapter, where the candidates for the intensive training course are carefully selected. It is important that applicants be chosen with care and be made to realize that they are enrolling for wartime service in a disciplined Corps which demands patriotic devotion to duty. Emphasis must be laid on physical fitness, emotional stability, mental alertness, and adaptability to unexpected situations as well as on ability to accept the discipline of the Corps.

Requirements for Establishing a Nurses' Aide Corps

A Red Cross Volunteer Nurses' Aide Committee must be set up in each chapter as a

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subcommittee of the Volunteer Special Services Committee. The committee membership must include nursing and lay representatives, the local Chief of Emergency Medical Service, the local Nurse Deputy, and a representative of the local Civilian Defense Volunteer Office. It is responsible for maintaining training standards and discipline and for supervising the service (Red Cross Form 1901).

The instructor for the course must be a well-qualified, registered, graduate nurse, authorized annually by the Area Headquarters of the American Red Cross (qualifications and application, Red Cross Form 1529).

The eighty (80) hour Syllabus, ARC 774, is to be used.

Volunteers chosen to take the training must meet stated physical and educational requirements, and must agree to accept all regulations concerning future service in the Volunteer Nurses' Aide Corps (Red Cross Form 1239-A).

A maximum of thirty (30) aides is allowed in each class.

The duties authorized for the service must be adhered to by the local Red Cross Volunteer Nurses' Aide Committee and by hospitals and organizations using the volunteers (ARC 775).

It is expected that each local Red Cross Chapter establishing a Volunteer Nurses' Aide Corps will adhere strictly to the basic requirements stated above. Because of the widely diverse situations existing in local communities, it may become necessary in some chapters for the Nurses' Aide Committee to make minor adjustments in the general plan.

Hospitals approved as training centers should be general hospitals caring for men, women, and children and should be on the approved lists of the American Medical Association and the American College of Surgeons. Exceptions to these requirements may be granted on the basis of the hospital's standard of nursing practice, the availability of supervision by graduate nurses and the local need for Nurses' Aides and must be approved by the Red Cross Area Office. Acceptability of hospitals is determined in each State through a joint conference of the State Chief of Emergency Medical Service, the State Nurse Deputy, representatives of the State Hospital Association and the State Board of Nurse Examiners, and a nursing consultant of the Red Cross Area Office.

Hospitals that wish to train or use the services of Volunteer Nurses' Aides should apply to the Nurses' Aide Committee of the local Red Cross.

Requirements for Applicants

Age.—Between 18 and 50 when enrolled.

Citizenship.—American or friendly alien.

Physical.—Satisfactory physical condition. (A physical examination is required and must be reported on Form 1239-B.)

Education.—Graduation from high school or its equivalent.

Requirements for Membership in Red Cross Volunteer Nurses' Aide Corps and the Nurses' Aide Unit of the U. S. Citizens Defense Corps

Satisfactory completion of the 80-hour course (ARC 774).

Completion of Standard Red Cross First Aid Course (20 hours) within first year of service.

Agreement to serve at least 150 hours annually.

Agreement to serve without pay.

Agreement to accept the policies and rules of the Corps as defined by the Office of Civilian Defense and the American Red Cross.

Agreement to serve in emergencies in local hospitals and casualty stations.

Oath of membership in Nurses' Aide Unit, U. S. Citizens Defense Corps.

In order to include the services of Volunteer Nurses' Aides in the civilian defense program, a Nurses' Aide Unit has been established in the U. S. Citizens Defense Corps. The oath of membership is administered without cost by a representative of the local defense council and, whenever possible, Nurses' Aides who have successfully completed the 80-hour course should receive their Red Cross certificates and be admitted to membership in the Citizens Defense Corps at a joint ceremony. If this should be impracticable, they should be inducted into the Citizens Defense Corps at the earliest opportunity so as to be fully authorized to wear the prescribed OCD-Red Cross sleeve and cap insignia identifying them as Nurses' Aides.

The Curriculum

The Syllabus (ARC 774) is the revision prepared with the collaboration of the Medical Division of the Office of Civilian Defense to

meet wartime needs. The instructional material is presented in outline form only. No attempt has been made to cover each subject exhaustively. It is expected that the instructor will draw upon her own knowledge and experience to elaborate on the outline and to interpret properly the subject to the class.

Volunteer Nurses' Aide Course

Two units—Total time, 80 hours.

Unit I. Instruction on Care of the Sick in the Hospital 34 hours.

(One hour of lecture and demonstration and one or more hours of practice daily, five days a week.)

Unit I may be given in the local Red Cross Chapter House or other suitable and properly equipped room.

Unit II. Supervised Practice in the Hospital 45 hours.

(Three hours a day for five days a week.)

Unit II is to be given in a hospital designated for this purpose as a training center for Volunteer Nurses' Aides.

Examination 1 hour.

Adjustments in the distribution of the required number of hours may be made for evening classes.

Duties

Nurses' Aides never assume independent nursing responsibilities and always work under the supervision of a graduate nurse.

The authorized duties which the prescribed training and practice prepare Aides to perform are listed in Chapter Organization and Administration of Red Cross Volunteer Nurses' Aide Corps (ARC 775 and ARC 775C). These duties are subject to the approval of the individual institution or organization to which the volunteer is assigned. A partial list includes:

In hospitals.—Make beds and ether beds; give baths; take temperature, pulse, and respiration; give cleansing enemas; apply unsterile hot and cold compresses; keep patient's personal ward or room neat and orderly; put away supplies; take care of linen closet; clean equipment trays; take care of rubber goods; prepare patients for meals; feed patients; take patients to and from treatment rooms; chaperon and drape patients for doctor's examination.

In clinics.—Similar to above and assist in registering; undress and dress children; weigh

and measure patients; keep clinic equipment clean and in order.

In community health agencies.—Nursing duties approved by the organization; home visits to obtain information or give routine instructions.

In emergency services.—Perform usual duties in hospitals; assist doctors and nurses in Casualty Stations and Mobile Medical Teams of the Emergency Medical Service; home visits under direction of the health agency responsible for follow-up of casualties and nursing care of patients in homes. For effective service in Civilian Defense activities, Nurses' Aides should be made familiar with the organization of the local Defense Council, with the general duties and operation of the Emergency Medical Service, and with its relationship to other protection units of the U. S. Citizens Defense Corps.

Uniform and Insignia

The uniform which is to be worn after the first 34 hours of the course by Volunteer Nurses' Aides who are being trained for service in Civilian Defense is a blue cotton jumper apron, worn over a regulation white blouse, plainly tailored and inexpensive.

A 3-inch Civilian Defense-Red Cross insignie will be worn on the left sleeve. This consists of a red cross on the white triangle within a blue circle to indicate that the Aide has been enrolled and trained by the Red Cross for Civilian Defense.

After the course is satisfactorily completed, a cap, made of the same blue material as the uniform, with a facing of white, will be worn. An Office of Civilian Defense-Red Cross insignie (1¼-inch) for Nurses' Aides is sewed in the center front of the cap on the white facing. The Red Cross Volunteer Nurses' Aide pin is awarded at this time and is worn at the center front of the jumper at the neck line.

A white service stripe, to be worn over the left breast, may be awarded upon completion of the first 150 hours of volunteer service on hospital wards. A second stripe may be awarded upon completion of 500 hours of work in hospitals, clinics, or health organizations, and an additional stripe for each additional 500 hours of like service thereafter. Service stripes are not given for administrative work.

Responsibilities of the Local Civilian Defense Volunteer Office

1. To serve as a place of registration and to assist with the recruitment of Nurses' Aides in cooperation with the Nurses' Aide Committee of the Red Cross, on which the Volunteer Office is represented.

2. Through the Information Committee of the Defense Council to give publicity to the need for Nurses' Aides for wartime services in civilian hospitals and health departments as well as in Casualty Stations and with Mobile Medical Teams of the Emergency Medical Service.

Responsibilities of the Local Chief of Emergency Medical Service

1. To serve as an active member of the Nurses' Aide Committee of the American Red Cross.

2. To assist local chapters in concluding arrangements with appropriate general hospitals to serve as training centers.

3. To arrange for induction of Nurses' Aides into the Citizens Defense Corps as members of the Nurses' Aide Unit.

4. To plan in advance with the Red Cross Nurses' Aide Committee and with hospitals for the assignment of Nurses' Aides for emergency service with mobile medical teams in Casualty Stations and in hospitals.

5. In emergencies for which local civilian defense authorities assume responsibility, to direct the activities of Nurses' Aides assigned to the Emergency Medical Service and to obtain, through the Nurses' Aide Committee, additional aides to meet the emergency needs of the community.

Responsibilities of the Red Cross Volunteer Nurses' Aide Committee

1. To recruit volunteers for enrollment in cooperation with the Office of Civilian Defense.

2. To interview and select candidates.

3. To supervise the training and administer the service of the Corps.

4. To coordinate the aide service with the program of the local Office of Civilian Defense.

5. To safeguard standards.

6. To determine local policies.

Responsibility for the Assignment of Nurses' Aides

When the course is satisfactorily completed, the Red Cross Volunteer Nurses' Aide Com-

mittee serves as a placement agency for the assignment of Aides to hospitals, clinics, health departments, school health, and visiting nursing services.

As members of the United States Citizens Defense Corps of the Office of Civilian Defense, Nurses' Aides will be on call for emergency service in hospitals, in Casualty Stations, and with Mobile Medical Teams of the Emergency Medical Service. The Red Cross Volunteer Nurses' Aide Committee will reassign Nurses' Aides to such emergency duties upon request of the local Chief of Emergency Medical Service, who will keep currently informed of the needs in all local hospitals, health and field nursing organizations. Personal qualifications and family responsibilities will be taken into account in determining the type of duty for which Nurses' Aides are to be called. Plans should be made in advance regarding the assignment of Aides as members of Medical Teams or as assistants in Casualty Stations. The Aides should be instructed by a member of the Emergency Medical Service in the duties they will be expected to perform in time of emergency.

ADDRESS OF NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND JURISDICTIONS AND ADDRESSES OF AREA OFFICES

AMERICAN RED CROSS, NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, 17th and D Streets NW., Washington, D. C.

NORTH ATLANTIC AREA: 300 Fourth Avenue, New York, New York:

Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont.

EASTERN AREA: 615 North St. Asaph Street, Alexandria, Virginia:

Alabama, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia.

MIDWESTERN AREA: 1709 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri:

Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

PACIFIC AREA: Civic Auditorium, Larkin and Grove Streets, San Francisco, California:

Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington.

INSULAR AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS: 17th and D Streets NW., Washington, D. C.:

Canal Zone, Guam, Hawaii, Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico, Samoa, Virgin Islands.