**Introduction**

Even though the patient is locked up in a difficult situation, professional nursing practice should not ignore checking the patient. National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) provides various policies that help in reducing health risks and health care costs (Schoenly & Catherine, 2013). The agency also outlines the different practices that can affects outcome of the health care. Correctional agency allows the nurse to exercise the true spirit of nursing and recognize that every patient has important value. If the health care practices true professional nursing values as outlined or directed in correctional settings, they can develop exclusive set of ethical and legal standards needed from them. This paper will discuss various ethical and legal issues which are addressed by correctional nurses in their practice.

**Ethical Concerns**

It is common for those nurses in traditional medical setting to occasionally have ethical decisions, and at times they may find themselves in a dilemma. On the other hand, correctional nurse have tendency facing ethical situations on daily basis. Correctional nurse provide ethical decisions concerning care delivery, planning for patient advocacy, and delivering safe patient care (Anne & Smith, 2013).  The health care providers are required to follow six of the ethical principles for those working in correctional settings. These include: respect the patient, Nonmaleficence (avoiding harm), Beneficence, Veracity (telling truth), Justice (fairness), and Fidelity (be faithful). The principles also act as a guide while nurses are making ethical decisions as they refer to the American Nurse Association’s code of ethics (Schoenly, 2011). The code outlines various ethical standards, roles, levels, and setting expectations across all settings.

The major ethical concerns that develop from the correctional nurse is related to exercising caring and understanding as well as maintaining safe boundaries. In addition, nurse must ensure that every patient has access to care. The correctional nurse evaluates the effectiveness and the quality of services offered to the patients. It makes the nurse to work in and ensure that the health requirements of inmates are valued and responded as soon as possible. Another emerging ethical concern for correctional nurse involves the end-of life care. Patients can easily die if incarcerated and correctional nurse ensures that they play the role of assisting patient to die with respect and comfort (Schoenly, 2011). In different prisons, nurses participate in execution and this may be viewed as an ethical issue. The correctional nurses are not allowed to conduct such executions. This clause is based on the ANA’s code of ethics and NCCHC’s *Standards for Health Service in Prison* (standard P-I-07).

Finally, another field that develops ethical concern is the professional practice. Nurses are asked to follow the ANA’s scope and standards of practice. The legal implications of nursing are linked to licensure, state or federal laws. Public expect all nurses to practice at the highest professional standard. The nurses are required to deliver certain services and practices according to their education, nursing standards and license. If the nurse practices below the acceptable standards of care and competence, this may lead to litigation care giver (Schoenly & Catherine, 2013).

**Conclusion**

There are many challenges that face the nurses practicing in the correctional health specialty. However, despite the challenges, correctional nurses have great opportunity to improve service delivery to this vulnerable population and bring great impact to patient.

**Reference**

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