



Setting up a Nursing Respiratory Group or network

If you are interested or thinking about setting up a Nursing Respiratory Group, there are a variety of starting points you may wish to consider first.

- Setting up an independent Group for respiratory nurses
- Setting up a respiratory group of an existing general nursing Group
- Setting up a respiratory nurse group of an existing medical Group
- Setting up an Group with other allied health professional e.g. physiotherapists and having a nurses group or developing a group in an existing Group

Firstly it would be useful to check if there is any kind of a group in your country, however large or small that you could join forces with. You may want to have a look over the internet or reach out via social media.

It will help to network with likeminded people who can develop a strategy that best meets your particular country or area. The actions required will differ significantly depending on the option you choose and you may wish to explore a couple of options. For example you may develop a nurses group of a medical group initially and then expand this to be its own group.

Funding will depend upon the strategy you decide upon. A free to join group will attract members quicker and in higher numbers but you will need alternative income. If a nominal fee is charged additional income may also be required to sustain your group.

In some countries there may be benefits in acquiring a legal not for profit status, but you will need to take advise from a legal person in your own country as regulations will vary.

Below is an example of a Nurse Group constitution:

Objectives of the Group

1. To influence respiratory strategies at a national level through the knowledge and experience of the members.
2. To co-operate and collaborate with other respiratory specialist groups, professional groups and patient groups, to influence improvements and developments in respiratory care.
3. To be recognised as effective change agents with strong leadership skills and values, which represent evolving respiratory services
4. To participate in raising the standard of respiratory nursing and clinical effectiveness in conjunction with the relevant government policies.

MEMBERS

The criteria for membership of the group should be clearly defined, to prevent confusion you may wish to specify that all members will be registered nurses and have some specific criteria e.g. include nurses both in the community and hospital setting as specialist respiratory nurses or those with an interest in respiratory care

Any person who fulfils the criteria for membership may apply by making application on a simple application form. The applicant shall not be considered a member until the application has been considered and approved by the committee.

It is useful to renew membership annually, in order to keep a database of members contact details.

OFFICERS

This is the team elected each year to manage the group on behalf of the members. You may wish to appoint a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and a Secretary to run the group.

The Chair provides leadership for the Committee, and sets the agenda for meetings and manages meetings in line with the agenda.

The Secretary is a key committee member and ensures that the group runs smoothly. The Secretary provides a link between committee members and the group. The Secretary deals with all correspondence that the group receives and helps the Chair ensure that the Committee's meetings run smoothly.

One of the key roles of the Committee is to manage and control the funds of the group. All Committee members have equal responsibility for the control and management of the funds. The Treasurer plays an important part in helping the Committee carry out these duties properly.

- The officers shall be members of the Committee, with full voting rights.
- All committee members have equal voting rights, except for the Chair of a Committee meeting who has the casting vote.
- All the officers should be members of the group.
- Sometimes groups are fortunate to have a secretariat, this can be either on a voluntary or paid basis. A secretariat will carry out the administrative duties, such as arrange meetings etc.

THE COMMITTEE

The group should think about being administered by a committee. You would need to decide how people become members of the committee. This is usually a voting process.

The purpose is to fulfil the objectives of the group and manage all affairs to the best of their ability and have power to do everything necessary for that purpose.

You will need to decide how frequent the group meets. This is normally between 3 to 4 times in a year, however you would need to decide this number. The Chair of the group shall normally Chair meeting of the committee but in the absence of the Chair, the meeting shall elect a Chair.

The Committee should delegate certain duties to Sub-groups, which it shall appoint when deemed necessary. The Committee should elect the members and one of their number as Chair for each sub-group.

You need to decide what best meets your local needs, and most of all remember you will be making a real difference whatever you do.....and enjoy it!