



American Association of  
Directors of Nursing Services

\$30 for Non-members

# AADNS's Body of Knowledge for the Role of Director of Nursing Services in Long-Term Care

Guide to the AADNS Certification Program  
and Increasing Competence

*"This is a first of its kind."*

—**Susan LupPlace**, MSN, RN  
Independent Healthcare Consultant

*"I have been a DON for 30 years and this is the most  
comprehensive description of the skill set that a DON  
needs that I have ever seen. It is outstanding!"*

—**Shelley Acus**, RN, DNS-CT, QCP  
Director of Nursing Services



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## Summary of Domains and Tasks List

### Domain #1: Principles of Leadership

- Task 1: Promotes organizational vision, mission, and values
- Task 2: Applies the principles of leadership and management skills in the nursing department
- Task 3: Effectively uses different types of leadership styles to impact team function
- Task 4: Applies principles of leadership as a role model
- Task 5: Develops and fosters activities and functions of the nursing management team
- Task 6: Leads the nursing department in interdisciplinary team collaboration

### Domain #2: Individual Skills for Management and Supervision

- Task 1: Promotes the role of the manager in the nursing department
- Task 2: Ensures team compliance with laws governing the organization, residents, employees, and the environment
- Task 3: Employs effective interpersonal communication skills
- Task 4: Implements effective human resource management

### Domain #3: Organizational Oversight and Management

- Task 1: Applies principles of systems thinking for quality outcomes in the nursing department
- Task 2: Implements principles of staff competencies
- Task 3: Describes principles and processes for clinical surveillance of nursing systems
- Task 4: Utilizes nursing knowledge for oversight of the nursing department in specific resident care areas

### Domain #4: Business Acumen for the DNS

- Task 1: Understands the DNS's role in horizontal and vertical organizational hierarchies
- Task 2: Implements effective strategic planning processes
- Task 3: Applies principles of fiscal management
- Task 4: Describes the current healthcare environment impacting post-acute care
- Task 5: Applies principles of informatics and technology management to long-term care (LTC)
- Task 6: Engages marketing and public relations for the nursing department

### Domain #5: Quality Improvement in the Nursing Department

- Task 1: Applies the components of quality assurance and performance improvement (QAPI)
- Task 2: Describes how Quality Measures are used as outcome measures
- Task 3: Understands the Five-Star Quality Rating System and can evaluate nursing department performance based on the findings

### Domain #6: Regulatory Compliance

- Task 1: Demonstrates skills for continuous regulatory survey readiness
- Task 2: Applies principles of regulatory survey management
- Task 3: Ensures the system for ongoing compliance and ethics is implemented in the nursing department
- Task 4: Implements principles of resident rights and safety
- Task 5: Creates systems to address risk management

### Domain #7: Professional Development

- Task 1: Applies knowledge of nursing staff scope of practice in the organization of care delivery
- Task 2: Engages in the development of one's personal and professional competencies
- Task 3: Engages in advocacy to enhance the profession of nursing and resident care

