

3.25 STANDARDS FOR NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNITS (NICUs)**3.25.3 Intermediate NICU -- General Information****A. Intermediate NICU -- Definition**

1. For the purpose of the California Children's Services (CCS) program, an Intermediate Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) shall be defined as a nursery within a CCS-approved Pediatric Community, General Community or Special Hospital that has the capability of providing neonatal care services (intermediate and continuing care as defined in Section 3.25.3/A.2.), for sick neonates and infants who do not require intensive care but require care at a level higher than provided in a general nursery. Such infants may include, but are not limited to, infants requiring intravenous medication, exchange transfusion, feedings by nasogastric tube, parenteral nutrition, oxygen therapy and short term ventilatory assistance (approximately less than or equal to four hours), as per the CCS Manual of Procedures, Chapter 2.17.1/A., Medical Eligibility for Care in a CCS-approved NICU.
2. Types of care provided to sick neonates in an Intermediate NICU shall be defined as follows:
 - a. After initial stabilization, "intermediate care" is that care which is provided to neonates and infants who require:
 - 1) greater than or equal to eight hours, but less than 12 hours, of nursing care by a registered nurse per 24-hour period; and
 - 2) other medically necessary support.
 - b. "Continuing care" is that care which is provided to neonates and infants who require:
 - 1) greater than or equal to six hours, but less than eight hours, of nursing care by a registered nurse per 24-hour period; and
 - 2) may have previously received intermediate or intensive care but who no longer require these levels of care.

B. Intermediate NICU -- General Requirements and Procedure for CCS Program Approval

1. A hospital with an NICU wishing to participate in the CCS program, as an Intermediate NICU, for the care of sick infants shall be licensed by the Department of Health Services (DHS), Licensing and Certification Division under California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 22, Division 5, Chapter 1 as an:
 - a. acute general hospital, Article 1, Sections 70003, 70005; and

- b. Intensive Care Newborn Nursery (ICNN), Article 6, Sections 70483 through 70489.
- 2. An Intermediate NICU:
 - a. shall be located in a hospital approved by CCS as a Pediatric Community Hospital, as per Chapter 3.3.2, CCS Standards for Pediatric Community Hospitals; or
 - b. shall be located in a hospital approved by CCS as a General Community Hospital with licensed perinatal beds, as per Chapter 3.3.3, CCS Standards for General Community Hospitals; or
 - c. shall be located in a hospital approved by CCS as a Special Hospital which has licensed perinatal beds, as per Chapter 3.3.4, CCS Standards for Special Hospitals.
- 3. An Intermediate NICU shall have a Regional Cooperation Agreement as specified below:
 - a. An Intermediate NICU shall enter into written agreements, approved by the CCS program, with an affiliated CCS-approved Regional NICU(s). The Intermediate NICU may additionally enter into a written agreement(s), approved by the CCS program, with an affiliated CCS-approved Community NICU(s). All Regional Cooperation Agreements shall specify mutual responsibility for at least the following:
 - 1) joint education and training of perinatal health professionals; and
 - 2) joint development of guidelines for consultation by perinatal, neonatal, and other specialty disciplines, as indicated; and
 - 3) joint development of guidelines for maternal and neonatal patient referral and transport to and from each facility/NICU; and
 - 4) joint identification, development and review of protocols, policies and procedures related to the care of the high-risk obstetric and neonatal patient, at least every two years; and
 - 5) joint review of outcome data, according to CCS requirements, at least annually.
 - b. The Regional Cooperation Agreement shall be developed, negotiated, signed, and dated prior to CCS approval by at least the following persons from each hospital:
 - 1) Hospital Administrator; and
 - 2) Medical Director of the NICU; and

- 3) Medical Director, Maternal-Fetal Medicine, (hospitals without licensed perinatal beds are exempt from this requirement); and
 - 4) Nurse Administrator.
- c. It shall be the mutual responsibility of the Regional, Community, and Intermediate NICUs to review annually and recommend any modifications of said agreement to reflect the evaluation of outcome.
4. An NICU shall meet and maintain CCS Standards for Intermediate NICUs, as contained within this Chapter. All NICUs shall conform to the most current edition of the American Academy of Pediatrics and The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AAP/ACOG) Guidelines for Perinatal Care. Where there is a conflict with specific AAP/ACOG recommendations and CCS Standards, the CCS Standards for NICUs shall apply.
5. A hospital wishing to participate in the CCS program for the care of sick infants and meets NICU requirements, shall complete a CCS NICU application in duplicate and submit both copies to: Department of Health Services; Chief, Children's Medical Services Branch; California Children's Services Program; 714 P Street, Room 350; P.O. Box 942732; Sacramento, CA 94234-7320. Questions concerning the standards and the application process should be directed to the appropriate CMS Regional Office.
6. Review Process
 - a. Upon receipt, the NICU application will be reviewed by the appropriate CMS Regional Office. A site visit will be scheduled if the documentation submitted by the hospital appears to meet the CCS Standards for Intermediate NICUs.
 - b. The site review shall be conducted by a state CCS review team in accordance with established CCS procedures for site visits. The team shall consist of State staff augmented by consultant experts in the fields of neonatology, neonatal critical care nursing, and, as indicated, by other medical specialists.
 - c. Approval shall be based on compliance with CCS Standards for Intermediate NICUs and upon site review of NICU procedures, services provided, patient chart review, the demonstration of community need and NICU patient outcome data.
 - d. Approval may be withheld if there is not a community need based on geographic considerations and a lack of sufficient caseload that is necessary to maintain proficiency in the care of critically ill neonates. The CCS program may consult with other divisions or branches within the DHS, such as the Maternal and Child Health Branch and/or Licensing and Certification Division and with other state and federal agencies to determine community need.

7. After the site visit, the following types of approval actions may be taken by the CCS program:
 - a. Full approval is granted when all CCS Standards for Intermediate NICUs are met.
 - b. Provisional approval may be granted when all CCS Standards for Intermediate NICUs appear to be met, however, additional documentation is required by the CCS program. This type of approval may not exceed one year.
 - c. Conditional approval, for a period not to exceed six months, may be granted when there are readily remediable discrepancies with program standards. The hospital must present a written plan for achieving compliance with program standards, and the plan must be approved by the CCS program. If the discrepancies are not corrected within the time frame specified by the CCS program, approval shall be terminated.
 - d. Denial is based upon failure of the hospital to meet CCS program standards
8. A hospital shall be notified in writing of the decision regarding approval status within 90 days after the site visit. A hospital whose application has been denied may appeal the decision by submitting a letter in writing to the Chief, Children's Medical Services Branch, within 30 days of receipt of the notification of denial.
9. Annually, as determined by CMS, the hospital shall submit a list of staff who meet the qualifications as specified in the CCS Standards for Intermediate NICUs to: Department of Health Services; Children's Medical Services Branch; Attention: Center Desk; 714 P Street, Room 398; P.O. Box 942732; Sacramento, CA 94234-7320. This list shall be accompanied by a copy of the most current hospital license. Any changes in the professional staff or facility requirements mandated by these standards shall be reported to the State CMS Branch at the address in Section 3.25.3/B.5. above within 30 days of occurrence.
10. Periodic reviews of CCS-approved NICUs may be conducted on an annual basis or as deemed necessary by the CCS program. If an NICU does not meet CCS program requirements, the NICU may be subject to losing CCS approval.

C. Intermediate NICU – CCS Program Participation Requirements

- 1 Facilities providing services to CCS-eligible clients shall agree to abide by the laws, regulations, and policies of the CCS and Medi-Cal programs. Specifically, facilities shall agree to:
 - a. Refer all neonates/infants with potentially eligible CCS conditions to the CCS program for review of CCS program eligibility.
 - b. Assist families with the CCS referral and enrollment process by providing CCS application forms, phone numbers, and office locations.

- c. Request prior authorization from the CCS program, as per Title 22, Section 42180.
- d. Notify the local CCS program office, in a timely manner, of specialized neonatal transport methods for potentially eligible neonates/infants to and from the facility/NICU.
- e. Accept referral of CCS-eligible clients including Medi-Cal patients, whose services are authorized by CCS.
- f. Serve CCS-eligible clients regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, or ancestry.
- g. Bill client's private insurance, Medi-Cal or Medicare within six months of service in accordance with Medi-Cal and Medicare regulations regarding claims submission time frames or within 12 months for private insurance prior to billing CCS, including Medi-Cal or Medicare, if the client is eligible for such coverage.
- h. Bill CCS within:
 - 1) six months from the date of service if the client does not have third party insurance coverage; or
 - 2) six months from the date of receipt of insurance payment/denial, including an explanation of benefits from the insurance carrier; or
 - 3) twelve months from the date of service if insurance carrier fails to respond.Utilize electronic claims submission when available, upon CCS request.
- j. Accept CCS payment for authorized services in accordance with state regulations as payment in full.
- k. Provide copies of medical records, discharge summaries, and other information as requested by the CCS program within ten working days of request.
- l. Provide annual reports as requested by the CCS program.
- m. Provide services in a manner that is family centered and culturally competent, including the provision of translators and written materials.
- n. Permit CCS staff to visit and monitor facilities to assure ongoing compliance with CCS standards.
- o. Assist and cooperate with CCS staff in the on-site utilization review by CCS staff of services provided to CCS-eligible clients.

2. Failure to abide by the regulations and procedures governing the CCS program may result in removal of the hospital from the list of CCS-approved facilities.

D. Intermediate NICU -- Exclusions

1. Hospitals that are formally and involuntarily excluded from participation in programs of federal and state agencies shall automatically be excluded from participation in the CCS program.
2. A hospital may also be excluded by the CCS program because of, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Failure to successfully complete the CCS approval process;
 - b. Inadequate and/or untimely addressing of deficiencies identified during a CCS site visit;
 - c. Loss of Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations accreditation; or
 - d. Failure to abide by the laws, regulations, standards, and procedures governing the CCS program.

E. Intermediate NICU -- Organization

1. There shall be a separate and identifiable administrative unit for the NICU.
2. Medical care of the Intermediate NICU shall be under the direction of a medical director:
 - a. Who shall meet the qualifications contained in Section 3.25.3/F.
 - b. Whose primary responsibility shall be the organization and supervision of the Intermediate NICU; and
 - c. Who shall not be the medical director of more than one NICU (Regional, Community or Intermediate) other than at the same contiguous medical building complex.
3. There shall be an Intermediate NICU nurse manager:
 - a. Who shall have the responsibility on a 24-hour basis for the organization, management, supervision and quality of nursing practice and nursing care in the NICU;
 - b. Who shall not be a nurse manager of more than one NICU other than at the same contiguous medical building complex; and

- c. Who shall meet the requirements contained in Section 3.25.3/F.
- 4. The Intermediate NICU medical director and the Intermediate NICU nurse manager shall have the joint responsibility for the development and review of an ongoing quality improvement program.
- 5. The Intermediate NICU medical director and the Intermediate NICU nurse manager shall have joint responsibility for the development and review of a Policies and Procedures Manual for the NICU which addresses, at a minimum, patient admission, patient care, discharge and transfer criteria.
- 6. There shall be an identified NICU multidisciplinary team:
 - a. Which shall have the responsibility for the coordination of all aspects of patient care; and
 - b. Which shall consist of, at a minimum, a CCS-paneled neonatologist or CCS-paneled pediatrician, a clinical nurse specialist or registered nurse, and a CCS-paneled medical social worker with current experience and practice in neonatal care and whose professional requirements are defined in Section 3.25.3/F. Optional members to the Intermediate NICU multidisciplinary team may include, but are not limited to, the following: CCS-paneled clinical registered dietitian, respiratory care practitioner, CCS-paneled occupational therapist and CCS-paneled physical therapist.

F. Intermediate NICU – Professional Resources and Requirements

1. Intermediate NICU Physician Staff

1.1 Intermediate NICU Medical Director

- a. There shall be a CCS-paneled neonatologist or CCS-paneled pediatrician with current experience and practice in neonatal medicine as the medical director who shall have the overall responsibility for the quality of medical care for the infants admitted to the NICU.
- b. A CCS-paneled neonatologist shall:
 - 1) be certified by the American Board of Pediatrics;
 - 2) be certified by the American Board of Pediatrics in the subspecialty of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine or shall be board certified in Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine within four years of completing training; and
 - 3) have evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and American Heart Association (AHA).

- c. A CCS-paneled pediatrician shall:
 - 1) be certified by the American Board of Pediatrics with evidence of current experience and practice in neonatal medicine;
 - 2) meet educational requirements defined in Section 3.25.3/K.; and
 - 3) have evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA.
- d. The responsibilities of the Intermediate NICU medical director shall include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1) Participation in the development, review and assurance of the implementation of NICU policies and procedures as described in Section 3.25.3/I.
 - 2) Approval of, at a minimum, written criteria that define the following:
 - a) Which infants shall be admitted to the NICU;
 - b) Which infants require discharge and/or transfer out of the Intermediate NICU; and
 - c) Which infants require consultation by a neonatologist or pediatrician with evidence of current experience and practice in neonatal medicine.
 - 3) Supervision of quality control and quality assessment activities (including morbidity and mortality reviews).
 - 4) Assuring NICU staff competency in resuscitation techniques.
 - 5) Assuring ongoing NICU staff education.
 - 6) Participation in NICU budget preparation.
 - 7) Oversight of infant transport to and from the NICU.
 - 8) Assuring maintenance of NICU database and/or vital statistics.
- e. The facility shall maintain written documentation of the qualifications and responsibilities of the Intermediate NICU medical director.

1.2 Intermediate NICU Neonatologist/Pediatrician Staff

- a. The Intermediate NICU medical director shall have one or more CCS-paneled associate neonatologist or pediatrician on staff who shall share the clinical care responsibilities of the NICU.
- b. A CCS-paneled neonatologist shall:
 - 1) be certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and
 - 2) be certified by the American Board of Pediatrics in the subspecialty of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine or shall be board certified in Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine within four years of completing training.
- c. A CCS-paneled pediatrician shall:
 - 1) be certified by the American Board of Pediatrics with evidence of current experience and practice in neonatal medicine; and
 - 2) meet educational requirements defined in Section 3.25.3/K.; and
 - 3) have evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA.

1.3 Intermediate NICU Additional Physician Staff

- a. There shall be a written agreement with a CCS-approved Regional or Community NICU for obtaining telephone consultation with a neonatologist on a 24-hour basis as defined in Section 3.25.3/H.
- b. There shall be a written agreement with a CCS-approved Regional NICU for obtaining telephone consultation on a 24-hour basis with all necessary specialties and disciplines as defined in Section 3.25.3/H. This does not preclude consultation agreements with Community NICUs.

2. Intermediate NICU Nurse Staff**2.1 Intermediate NICU Nurse Manager**

- a. There shall be a nurse manager of the NICU who shall direct the nursing administrative operation of the NICU, as per Section 3.25.3/E.3. and shall:
 - 1) be a registered nurse (R.N.) licensed by the State of California holding a master's degree in nursing; or
 - 2) be a R.N. holding a bachelor's of science degree in nursing (BSN) and either a master's degree in a related field or a certificate in nursing or

health care administration from a nationally recognized accrediting organization; and

- 3) have at least three years of clinical nursing experience one of which shall have been in a facility with an NICU that is equivalent to a Regional, Community, or Intermediate NICU or in a facility providing pediatric critical care.
- b. The responsibilities of the Intermediate NICU nurse manager shall include, at a minimum, personnel, fiscal and materiel management, and coordination of the quality improvement program for the NICU.
 - c. The Intermediate NICU nurse manager shall directly supervise the nurse supervisor for the NICU.
 - d. The facility shall maintain written documentation of the qualifications and responsibilities of the Intermediate NICU nurse manager.
 - e. If the nurse manager is dedicated solely to the NICU and does not oversee more than 30 full-time equivalent positions or 50 NICU staff members, the position and responsibilities of the nurse manager and the nurse supervisor may be combined under the nurse manager position.
 - f. The Intermediate NICU nurse manager shall have direct responsibility to the administrative director of nursing or individual holding an equivalent position.

2.2 Intermediate NICU Nurse Supervisor

- a. The Intermediate NICU nurse supervisor shall directly supervise personnel and assure the quality of clinical nursing care of patients in the NICU at all times.
- b. The Intermediate NICU nurse supervisor shall:
 - 1) be a R.N. licensed by the State of California with a BSN;
 - 2) have at least three years of clinical nursing experience, one year of which shall have been in a facility with an NICU that is equivalent to a Regional, Community or Intermediate NICU;
 - 3) have evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA; and
 - 4) have current certification in Neonatal Intensive Care Nursing from a nationally recognized accrediting organization, i.e. the National Certification Corporation (NCC).

- c. The Intermediate NICU nurse supervisor shall have 24-hour responsibility for:
 - 1) the direct supervision of all clinical personnel who provide patient care; and
 - 2) the day-to-day coordination and quality of clinical nursing care of patients in the NICU.
- d. The facility shall maintain written documentation of the qualifications and responsibilities of the Intermediate NICU nurse supervisor.
- e. The Intermediate NICU nurse supervisor shall not be assigned direct patient care responsibilities.
- f. When there is no Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) as specified in Section 3.25.3/F.2.3 below:
 - 1) the Intermediate NICU nurse supervisor shall be responsible for the responsibilities of the CNS as specified in Section 3.25.3/F.2.3.; and
 - 2) the Intermediate NICU nurse supervisor position cannot be combined with the Intermediate NICU nurse manager position.

2.3 Intermediate NICU Clinical Nurse Specialist (Optional, see Section 3.25.3/F.2.2.f. above)

- a. There may be a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) for the Intermediate NICU and who shall:
 - 1) be a R.N. licensed by the State of California;
 - 2) be certified by the State Board of Registered Nursing as a CNS, as per the California Business and Professions Code, Chapter 6, Section 2838 of the Nursing Practice Act;
 - 3) have at least two years of clinical experience in neonatal nursing care at least one of which shall have been in a facility with an NICU that is equivalent to a Regional, Community, or Intermediate NICU;
 - 4) have current certification in Neonatal Intensive Care Nursing from a nationally recognized accrediting organization, i.e. the NCC; and
 - 5) have evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA.
- c. The Intermediate NICU CNS shall be responsible for:
 - 1) directing the clinical nursing practice in the NICU;

- 2) coordination and assessment of critical care educational development and clinical competency of the nursing staff in the NICU; and for ensuring continued neonatal critical care nursing competency through educational programs for both the newly-hired and experienced nursing staff;
 - 3) consultation with staff on complex neonatal critical care nursing issues;
 - 4) oversight of comprehensive parent and or primary caretaker education activities; and
 - 5) ensuring the implementation of a coordinated and effective discharge planning program.
- d. The facility shall maintain written documentation of the qualifications and responsibilities of the Intermediate NICU CNS.

2.4 Intermediate NICU Neonatal Nurse Practitioner (optional)

- a. Neonatal nurse practitioners (NNPs) who provide care for infants in the NICU shall:
- 1) be a R.N. licensed by the State of California, as per CCR, Title 16, Division 14, Section 1482;
 - 2) have evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA; and
 - 3) have completed the NNP program in accordance with CCR, Title 16, Division 14, Article 8, Sections 1480 through 1485.
- b. The NNP shall provide medical and nursing care under the supervision of the medical director of the NICU, CCS-paneled neonatologist, or CCS-paneled pediatrician and shall function in accordance with standardized procedures as per CCR, Title 16, Division 14, Article 7, Sections 1470 through 1474.
- 2) hold a master's degree in nursing; and
 - 3) have current certification in Neonatal Intensive Care Nursing from a nationally recognized accrediting organization; and
 - 4) have evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA.

2.5 Intermediate NICU Charge Nurse

- a. There shall be at least one Intermediate NICU charge nurse for each shift in the NICU who shall:

- 1) be a R.N. licensed by the State of California;
 - 2) have education, training, and demonstrated competency in neonatal critical care nursing;
 - 3) demonstrate competency in the role of a charge nurse; and
 - 4) have evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA.
- b. The responsibilities of the Intermediate NICU charge nurse during each shift shall include the following:
- 1) coordinating the patient care activities of the NICU; and
 - 2) ensuring the delivery of quality patient care.
- c. The facility shall maintain written documentation of the qualifications and responsibilities of the Intermediate NICU charge nurse.

2.6 Intermediate NICU Registered Nurses

- a. R.N.s who are assigned direct patient care (intermediate and continuing care) responsibilities in the Intermediate NICU shall:
- 1) be licensed by the State of California;
 - 2) have education, training and demonstrated competency in neonatal critical care nursing; and
 - 3) have evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA.
- b. R.N.s functioning in an expanded role shall do so in accordance with standardized procedures as per CCR, Title 16, Division 14, Article 7, Sections 1470 through 1474.
- c. The facility shall maintain written documentation of the qualifications and responsibilities of the R.N. staff which shall include, at a minimum, the standards of competent performance of the R.N. staff providing care in the Intermediate NICU.

2.7 Intermediate NICU Licensed Vocational Nurses

- a. Licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) who provide nursing care in the NICU shall only provide nursing care to infants requiring continuing care and shall:

- 1) be licensed by the State of California;
 - 2) have demonstrated competency in neonatal critical care nursing;
 - 3) have evidence of current successful completion of the AHA Basic Life Support (BLS) or equivalent course;
 - 4) be limited to those responsibilities within their scope of practice, as per CCR, Title 16, Division 25, Chapter 1.; and
 - 5) be under the direction of a R.N.
- b. The facility shall maintain written documentation of the qualifications and responsibilities of the LVN, which shall include only those responsibilities in accordance with their scope of practice, as per CCR, Title 16, Division 25, Chapter 1.

2.8 Intermediate NICU Unlicensed Assistive Personnel

- a. Unlicensed Assistive Personnel, as defined by the State Board of Registered Nursing Position Statement, Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (September 1994), shall function in accordance with written policies and procedures which delineate the non-nursing task(s) the unlicensed assistive personnel is allowed to perform on infants requiring continuing care in the NICU under the direction of a R.N. These non-nursing tasks shall require no scientific knowledge and/or technical skill.
- b. The unlicensed assistive personnel may be utilized only as assistive to licensed nursing personnel under the direction of a R.N.

3. Intermediate NICU Respiratory Care Practitioner

- a. Respiratory care services shall be provided by respiratory care practitioners (RCPs) who are licensed by the State of California and have additional training in neonatal respiratory care. Additional training in neonatal respiratory care shall be demonstrated by the following:
- 1) Completion of a formal neonatal respiratory therapy course at an approved school of respiratory therapy that includes didactic and clinical course work; or
 - 2) Completion of a minimum of 20 hours of didactic and four weeks of precepted neonatal clinical experience in a hospital-based course at a facility with an NICU equivalent to a Regional or Community NICU.
- b. The facility shall maintain a written job description delineating the qualifications and duties of the RCP in the NICU which reflects the provision of practice in

accordance with Business and Professions Code, Respiratory Care Practice Act, Chapter 8.3, Article 1, Section 3702 and CCR, Title 16, Division 13.6, Articles 1 through 8.

- c. The RCP shall be responsible, at a minimum, for the monitoring and application of respiratory equipment.
- d. There shall be an identified RCP with expertise in neonatal respiratory care practice available at all times to the NICU.
- e. There shall be a system in place for ensuring continuing clinical respiratory care competency through educational programs both for the newly hired and experienced RCP staff, in accordance with CCR, Title 16, Division 13.6, Article 5.
- f. All RCPs providing services in the NICU shall have evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA.

4. Intermediate NICU Medical Social Worker

- a. Social work services shall be provided in the NICU by a CCS-paneled medical social worker (MSW) holding a master's degree in social work and who has expertise in psychosocial issues affecting the families of seriously ill neonates/infants.
- b. For every 15 patients in the NICU there shall be one full-time equivalent MSW.
- c. The facility have a written job description defining the qualifications, responsibilities and functions of the MSW in the Intermediate NICU.
- d. There shall be a written agreement with a CCS-approved Regional NICU with which the Intermediate NICU has a Regional Cooperation Agreement, for obtaining telephone consultation from a MSW as specified in Section 3.25.3/H.
- e. The MSW shall conform to requirements contained in Section 3.25.3/H.11.

5. Intermediate NICU Pharmaceutical Services

- a. There shall be at least one licensed pharmacist holding a doctoral degree in pharmacy (PharmD) with neonatal expertise available for consultation to the Intermediate NICU staff.
- b. Pharmacy staff and pharmaceutical services shall be available on a 24-hour basis to the Intermediate NICU.
- c. Pharmacy staff shall provide neonatal unit doses individual neonatal intravenous and parenteral nutrition solutions, neonatal nutritional products in clearly marked containers; and shall also provide continuous drug surveillance.

6. Intermediate NICU Clinical Registered Dietitian

- a. Nutritional consultation to the Intermediate NICU shall be provided by a CCS-paneled clinical registered dietitian who has clinical experience in pediatric and neonatal nutritional services.
- b. The clinical registered dietitian shall meet requirements contained in Chapter 3.3.2 of the CCS Standards for Pediatric Community Hospitals.
- c. There shall be a written agreement with a CCS-approved Regional NICU with which the Intermediate NICU has a Regional Cooperation Agreement for obtaining telephone consultation with a clinical registered dietitian as specified in Section 3.25.3/H.

G. Intermediate NICU – Facilities and Equipment

- 1 An Intermediate NICU shall be a distinct, separate unit within the hospital.
- 2. An Intermediate NICU shall meet the following bed requirements:
 - a. There shall be at least six licensed ICNN beds for providing intermediate and continuing care and:
 - 1) At least one of the six beds shall have 80 square feet per patient station, to be utilized for infant stabilization shall meet all requirements pertaining to space, equipment, supplies, and physical environment for intensive care as required in the ICNN regulations, CCR, Title 22, Division 5, Sections 70487 and 70489.
 - 2) There shall be at least five beds in the Intermediate NICU providing intermediate and/or continuing care which are not licensed under CCR, Title 22, Division 5, Article 6, Section 70489 but are licensed under program flexibility, CCR, Title 22, Article 4, Division 5, Section 70307. Those beds licensed under program flexibility shall not be used for intensive care and shall, at a minimum, have the following:
 - a) fifty square feet for each patient station exclusive of space needed for storage, desks, counters, treatment rooms, et cetera and
 - b) eight electrical outlets, two oxygen outlets, two compressed air outlets, and two suction outlets per patient station.
 - b. Beds in addition to the six bed requirements of Sections 3.25.3/G.2.a.1) and 2) in the Intermediate NICU which provide only continuing care and are licensed under program flexibility, CCR, Title 22, Division 5, Article 4, Section 70307 shall at a minimum, have the following:

- 1) forty square feet for each patient station exclusive of space needed for storage, desks, counters, treatment rooms, et cetera and
 - 2) four electrical outlets, one oxygen outlet, one compressed air outlet and one suction outlet per patient station.
- c. For the purpose of CCS Standards, program flexibility granted by Licensing and Certification for areas other than beds/patient stations, shall be superceded by the requirements in this document
3. An Intermediate NICU shall have the following space/rooms available within, adjacent to, or in close proximity to the NICU:
 - a. an on-call physician's room/sleeping quarter;
 - b. a parent waiting room;
 - c. a separate room available parent and infant interaction in privacy;
 - d. a separate room for parent and physician/staff conferences, NICU multidisciplinary team conferences, case presentations, teaching/in-service education, and other staff meetings.
4. In addition to meeting the requirements contained in CCR, Title 22, Division 5, Article 6, Section 70487, Intensive Care Newborn Nursery Service Equipment and Supplies, an Intermediate NICU shall have:
 - a. One bed used for infant stabilization at 80 square feet that meets the following requirements:
 - 1) monitoring equipment at the infant station in the NICU that has, at a minimum, the capability of:
 - a) heart rate and electrocardiogram (ECG);
 - b) respiratory rate;
 - c) temperature; and
 - d) oxygen saturation and/or transcutaneous PaO₂.
 - 2) individual infant monitoring equipment shall have characteristics including, at a minimum, the following:
 - a) visible and audible high/low alarms for heart rate, respiratory rate, and all pressures;

- b) hard-copy capability of the rhythm strip;
 - c) routine testing and maintenance of all monitors; and
 - d) two pressure monitoring channels.
- b. Beds used for intermediate care and are not used for infant stabilization that meet the following requirements:
 - 1) monitoring equipment at the infant station in the NICU shall have at a minimum the capability to monitor:
 - a) heart rate and ECG;
 - b) respiratory rate;
 - c) temperature; and
 - d) oxygen saturation and/or transcutaneous PaO₂
 - 2) individual infant monitoring equipment that have characteristics including at a minimum the following:
 - a) visible and audible high/low alarms for heart rate, respiratory rate, and pressure;
 - b) routine testing and maintenance of all monitors; and
 - c) one pressure monitoring channel per every two beds.
- c. Beds licensed for continuing care and are not used for continuing care that meet the following requirements:
 - 1) monitoring equipment at the infant station in the NICU that have the capability of:
 - a) heart rate and ECG;
 - b) respiratory rate; and
 - c) oxygen saturation.
 - 2) individual infant monitoring equipment that have characteristics including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a) visible and audible high/low alarms for heart rate and respiratory rate; and

- b) routine testing and maintenance of all monitors.
- d. Equipment for infants, available in the NICU, that includes but is not limited to the following:
 - 1) emergency ("code" or "crash") cart with emergency drugs with size/weight appropriate neonatal unit dose; defibrillator;
 - 2) neonatal surgical cut-down trays (including equipment for umbilical vessel catheterization, thoracostomy, chest and pericardial tube placement, peripheral vessel cutdown, and exchange transfusion);
 - 3) chest tube drainage, collection, water seal, and suction devices;
 - 4) incubators;
 - 5) radiant heat device;
 - 6) heart rate/respiratory rate/blood pressure monitors;
 - 7) blood pressure transducers;
 - 8) automated noninvasive blood pressure apparatus;
 - 9) pulse oximeter;
 - 10) neonate scale(s), 10 kilogram;
 - 11) 500 gram scale(s), with one gram increments;
 - 12) infusion pumps (with microinfusion capability);
 - 13) intravenous stands;
 - 14) suction pressure regulators;
 - 15) suction/drainage bottles;
 - 16) vascular access equipment;
 - 17) suction catheters in a range of sizes, (i.e. 10, 8, 6 French [Fr], and smaller);
 - 18) feeding tubes # 5 and # 8 Fr;
 - 19) nasogastric tubes # 10 Fr;

- 20) stethoscopes, infant size appropriate;
- 21) otoscopes and ophthalmoscopes;
- 22) neonate laryngoscope with # 0 and # 1 laryngoscope blades, spare batteries, and bulbs;
- 23) endotracheal tubes, sterile and disposable, sizes 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0 mm with malleable stylets;
- 24) oral airways;
- 25) portable surgical illumination/procedure lamp;
- 26) wall clocks with sweep second hand; and
- 27) portable transilluminator.
- e. Equipment for infants available to the NICU that includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 1) ECG machine;
 - 2) central venous catheters, both temporary and permanent;
 - 3) phototherapy lights;
 - 4) refrigerators;
 - 5) ice maker;
 - 6) surgical tray stands;
 - 7) supply carts;
 - 8) blood warming apparatus;
 - 9) heating mattresses;
 - 10) electric breast pump; and
 - 11) freezer for storage of breast milk.
- f. Respiratory equipment for infants available in and/or to the NICU that includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 1) oxygen-air blenders;

- 2) gas flow meters (oxygen and air);
 - 3) continuous oxygen analyzers with alarms;
 - 4) oxygen humidifier/nebulizer with heater;
 - 5) oxygen temperature detectors with alarms;
 - 6) oxygen hoods;
 - 7) ventilation bag, 500 ml flow-through with adjustable pop-off valve capable of generating pressure of 40-50 mm Hg;
 - 8) face masks in appropriate sizes for neonates;
 - 9) mechanical ventilators;
 - 10) CPAP capability either via ventilator or separate units;
 - 11) aerosol medication administration equipment; and
 - 12) chest physiotherapy and suctioning equipment.
5. Oxygen and compressed air, supplied from a central source, shall supply 50 pounds per square inch (psi) with an alarm system to warn of a critical reduction in line pressure. Reduction valves and blenders shall produce concentrations of oxygen from 21 percent to 100 percent at atmospheric pressure for head hoods and 50 psi for mechanical ventilators. Oxygen monitoring for inspired concentrations shall be available in the NICU.
 6. Transport equipment with provisions for temperature control, ventilation, and cardiopulmonary monitoring shall be available for the transport of infants within the hospital and shall meet conditions in CCR, Title 22, Division 5, Article 6, Section 70487.
 7. Diagnostic imaging procedures and consultation services necessary for the level of care provided shall be available on a 24-hour basis as specified in Chapter 3.3.2 of the CCS Standards for Pediatric Community Hospitals.
 8. Laboratory services and consultation services necessary to the level of care provided shall be available on a 24-hour basis. There shall be the capability for a ten minute turnaround time for pH and blood gas determinations.

H. Intermediate NICU – Patient Care

- 1 The care of CCS-eligible infants in the NICU shall be under the direct supervision of the Intermediate NICU medical director, CCS-paneled neonatologist or CCS-paneled pediatrician who meet requirements in Section 3.25.3/F.

2. Infants requiring care provided by a NNP shall have daily review, evaluation, and documentation of care by a CCS-paneled neonatologist or CCS-paneled pediatrician.
3. A CCS-paneled neonatologist or CCS-paneled pediatrician shall review, evaluate, and document the clinical management of each infant, on-site, at least on a daily basis.
4. It shall be the responsibility of the CCS-paneled neonatologist or CCS-paneled pediatrician to ensure that information is provided, on an ongoing basis, to referring physicians regarding their patients.
5. There shall be a CCS-paneled neonatologist or CCS-paneled pediatrician who is on-call to the NICU on a 24-hour basis who:
 - a. shall be in the hospital or be no more than 30 minutes away from the NICU at any time; and
 - b. shall not be on-call for more than one hospital at the same time; and
 - c. shall be notified of new admissions and adverse changes in the status of neonates in a timely manner as described in Section 3.25.3/H.6 below.
6. A neonatologist, pediatrician in postdoctoral training in neonatal-perinatal subspecialty medicine, a NNP, and/or a physician who has completed more than two years of a postgraduate pediatric residency training program with experience and training in neonatology shall be in-house and called:
 - a. whenever an unstable infant is in the NICU; and
 - b. when there is a major change in the infant's condition which requires a reevaluation.
7. There shall be 24-hour in-house coverage by a professional staff (physician, NNP, and/or R.N.):
 - a. who has evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA ;and
 - b. who is proficient in needle aspiration for pneumothorax and intubation for resuscitation.
8. Nurse staffing in the Intermediate NICU shall meet requirements contained in CCR, Title 22, Division 5, Article 6, Section 70485; Section 3.25.3/F.2.; and shall also include the following:
 - a. The nurse supervisor or designee shall be present in the NICU at all times.

- b. There shall be at least one nurse supervisor assigned to the NICU for every 30 full-time equivalent NICU positions or 50 NICU staff members to be supervised, whichever is less.
 - c. There shall be a R.N. assigned to each patient in the NICU.
 - d. There shall be no less than two R.N.s physically present in each area of care of the NICU at all times, when a patient is present.
 - e. A NNP assigned to the NICU may not be included in the calculation of the nurse staff to infant ratio in the NICU.
 - f. There shall be no more than one LVN for every three R.N.s assigned to provide direct nursing care to infants requiring continuing care.
9. Unlicensed assistive personnel in the NICU may only be assigned non-nursing tasks to infants requiring continuing care and which require no scientific knowledge and/or technical skill.
10. Neonates requiring greater than or equal to four hours of mechanical ventilation shall be transferred to a CCS-approved Regional or Community NICU, as specified in Section 3.25.3/A.

There shall be a MSW assigned to all patients upon admission to the NICU and:

- a. A social work assessment shall be completed within two working days of admission.
- b. The social work assessment shall include an interview of at least one of the infant's parents or primary caretaker. The parent(s) or primary caretaker(s) shall be included as early as possible in the decision-making process(es) relating to the care of their infant.
- c. A preliminary case service plan shall be developed with the parent(s) or primary caretaker(s) within five working days of admission to the NICU which shall include but not be limited to, the assessment of the following: significant family stress factors, environmental factors, mental health factors, and any other psychosocial factors and how these factors in the family will be addressed.
- d. Social work progress notes shall be completed at least on a weekly basis or more often as indicated and shall include psychosocial data, significant changes in the infant's family, updates on implementation and results of the service plan and plans to continue contact with the family for ongoing support.
- e. MSW reports and notes shall be recorded in the infant's chart and be readily available to other NICU team members.

- f. The authorizing CCS program shall have access to social work reports in order to coordinate services.
- 12. The Intermediate NICU shall obtain physician, nursing, MSW and clinical registered dietitian consultation on a 24-hour basis from the CCS-approved Regional NICU with which the Intermediate NICU has a Regional Cooperation Agreement.
- 13. Physicians, nurses, medical social worker, and clinical registered dietitian shall be available for consultation to community practitioners and facilities who refer patients to the NICU.
- 14. There shall be, at a minimum, weekly NICU multidisciplinary team conferences (rounds).
 - a. The NICU multidisciplinary team conferences shall include representation of the NICU's medical, nursing, medical social service, and other specialists, such as the clinical registered dietitian, RCP staff, occupational therapist and physical therapist, when appropriate.
 - b. Minutes of these weekly team conferences which document attendance and discussion of plan(s) of care for the individual infants shall be included either in the infant's chart or in a binder that shall be available for review by CCS program staff.
- 15. The Intermediate NICU medical director shall be responsible either directly or through written agreements with a CCS-approved Regional NICU or agency, that a mechanism for neonatal transport exists. This does not preclude transport agreements with a CCS-approved Community NICU.
 - a. The written neonatal transport agreement for the provision of transport services of infants by another NICU or agency shall be subject to CCS program approval. The neonatal transport agreement shall be updated and signed annually by the medical directors of the NICUs involved in the agreement.
 - b. The medical director of the neonatal transport program shall be responsible for a written neonatal transport plan, as per CCS Standards for Regional and Community NICUs, as applicable. Maintenance of written records of each neonatal transport completed shall be available for review by CCS program staff.
 - c. The NICU shall agree to accept, on a space and staff available basis, any infant requiring a level of care beyond that which can be provided by a hospital with which the NICU has transport agreements and/or by the Regional Perinatal Dispatch Center. All guidelines and reporting requirements of the Regional Perinatal Dispatch Center shall be followed.
- 16. The Intermediate NICU shall participate in the California Newborn Hearing Screening Program (NHSP) and shall perform a hearing screening test on each infant receiving care in the NICU using protocols approved by DHS.

Intermediate NICU -- General Policies and Procedures

- 1 There shall be an Intermediate NICU Policies and Procedures Manual which shall be:
 - a. Updated, reviewed, and signed at least on an annual basis by the medical director and nurse manager of the Intermediate NICU; and
 - b. Readily available in the NICU for all NICU staff.
- 2 The written Policies and Procedures Manual for the Intermediate NICU shall address/include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Criteria delineating the privileges granted to attending CCS-paneled physicians and criteria as to when consultation by a neonatologist is required;
 - b. Criteria for admission of infants to the NICU;
 - c. Criteria for infant discharge from the NICU and infant transfer to/from the NICU;
 - d. Criteria for monitoring of infants in the NICU;
 - e. Pain management and sedation for operative and/or medical procedures;
 - f. Criteria for when NICU staff are called to provide neonatal resuscitation in the delivery room and written protocol for the provision of skilled neonatal resuscitation in the delivery room;
 - g. Mechanism for bioethical review of neonatal patients when indicated;
 - h. Mechanism for infection surveillance, prevention, and control in the NICU;

Discharge planning process which includes the roles of the designated coordinator for discharge planning and the NICU multidisciplinary team members with the parent or caretaker and the referring physician, primary care physician, and any specialized follow-up agencies, including CCS Special Care Centers and the Early Start Program;

Parent visitation in the NICU;
 - k. Mechanism for the referral to the hospital's child abuse and neglect team or Child Protective Services on a 24-hour basis;

A written plan that facilitates a family-centered and culturally competent approach to NICU care by the professional staff which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- 1) A system that will encourage and provide for inclusion of the parent(s) or primary caretaker(s) in the decision-making process relating to the care and interventions of their infant as early as possible; and
 - 2) A method for the parent(s) or primary caretaker(s) to provide input and feedback to the NICU multidisciplinary team members regarding their infant's care and experiences in the NICU.
- m. A system to ensure that all infants who are provided care in the NICU receive a hearing screening test prior to hospital discharge, in accordance with the California NHSP and as mandated by California Health and Safety Code, Section 123975.
- n. A system to ensure that an ophthalmology examination is performed on infants at risk for retinopathy of prematurity, as defined by the most recent joint statement of the AAP, the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology. The ophthalmology examination shall be performed by a CCS-paneled ophthalmologist with experience in the examination of preterm infants.

J. Intermediate NICU -- Discharge Planning Program

Discharge of infants from an Intermediate NICU shall be the responsibility of the CCS-paneled neonatologist or CCS-paneled pediatrician responsible for the care of the infant. Discharge planning, at a minimum, shall include but not be limited to the following:

- 1 Designation of a coordinator for discharge planning who shall be responsible for:
 - a. Ensuring collaboration between the NICU multidisciplinary team members and communication with the primary care physician, community agencies, CCS Special Care Centers, Medi-Cal In-Home Operations Unit, and the Early Start Program whose services may be required and/or related to the care needs of the infant after hospital discharge; and
 - b. Ensuring that each infant discharged from the NICU shall have follow-up by a primary care physician and a program specialized in the follow-up care of a high-risk infant.
2. Identification of the responsibilities and involvement of the NICU multidisciplinary team members in discharge planning activities on an ongoing basis.
3. Ensuring culturally and linguistically appropriate written discharge information shall be given to the parent(s) or primary caretaker(s) participating in the infant's care at the time of discharge and shall include, but are not limited to, the infant's diagnoses, medications, follow-up appointments, including community agencies and High-Risk Infant Follow-up program appointments and instructions on any medical treatment(s) that will be given by the parent(s) or primary caretaker(s). A copy of this written discharge information shall

be sent to the primary care physician and as applicable, agencies involved in providing follow-up care.

4. Ensuring that infants, who are determined by a neonatologist or a pediatrician, to be discharged from an Intermediate NICU to a facility closer to the home of the parent or primary caretaker shall:
 - a. be transferred to a CCS-approved NICU for those who continue to require NICU care or
 - b. be transferred to a CCS-approved hospital appropriate for those who no longer require NICU care but require continued hospitalization for the CCS-eligible condition.
5. Provision for teaching the parent, legal guardian, and/or primary caretaker about the medical needs of the infant, including the use of necessary technology to support the infant in the community, when appropriate.

K. Intermediate NICU -- Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement

1. There shall be an ongoing quality assurance program specific to the patient care activities in the Intermediate NICU that is coordinated with the hospital's overall quality assurance program.
 - a. Documentation shall be maintained of the quality assurance and quality assessment activities provided.
 - b. Documentation shall include utilization review and medical records review which shall be available for on-site review by CCS program staff.
2. There shall be morbidity and mortality conferences held at least quarterly to discuss neonatal care issues. These conferences shall be held conjointly with professionals in obstetrics or perinatal subspecialties.
 - a. CCS encourages multidisciplinary participation, including primary care physicians as well as participation by outside consultants on a regular basis.
 - b. A hospital without licensed perinatal beds is exempt from having a joint conference but shall have neonatology staff morbidity and mortality conferences.
 - c. Meeting agendas, lists of attendees, and minutes of such conferences shall be maintained and available for on-site review by CCS program staff.
3. There shall be a written plan that facilitates a family-centered and culturally competent approach to NICU care by the professional staff. This plan shall include, but not be limited to, a mechanism for the parent(s) or primary caretaker(s) to provide input and feedback to NICU multidisciplinary team members regarding their infant's care and

experiences in the NICU. This may be in the form of a patient/family satisfaction questionnaire.

4. There shall be a formalized method for the Intermediate NICU medical director to review, document on an annual basis, professionals who are required to successfully complete the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA as described in Section 3.25.3/F.
5. There shall be a formalized method for the reviewing and documenting on an annual basis, the skills of professionals responsible for 24-hour in-house coverage of the following:
 - a. neonatal resuscitation and intubation. This review shall be based on maintaining evidence of current successful completion of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program course of the AAP and AHA and
 - b. needle aspiration for pneumothorax.
6. Infant morbidity and mortality data concerning birth weight, survival, transfer, incidence of certain conditions, and other information as required, shall be compiled in a CCS-approved format and shall be submitted to the Chief, Children's Medical Services Branch/CCS program; 714 P Street, Room 350; P.O. Box 942732; Sacramento, CA 94234-7320; annually and are due on the first day of June for the preceding calendar year.
7. Assurance of continuing education for staff providing services in the NICU shall include at least the following:
 - a. There shall be a written plan for an orientation of all newly hired professionals who will be providing care in the NICU and an ongoing evaluation of the program. This written plan shall include the competencies required of the professional staff and documentation of successful demonstration of these competencies.
 - b. There shall be a written plan for the continuing education of all professionals involved in neonatal care.
 - 1) The continuing education program shall include, but is not limited to, a neonatal/perinatal in-service education program for all professionals, held at least monthly.
 - 2) CCS-paneled pediatricians providing care to infants requiring intermediate or continuing care shall document a minimum of 36 hours of continuing education in neonatal medicine every three years.
 - 3) All R.N.s providing care in the Intermediate NICU shall have documentation of completing 40 hours annually of clinical training in

neonatal critical care nursing at a CCS-approved Regional or Community NICU.

- c. The Intermediate NICU shall have in-house educational programs which are based on the standards of practice for all professionals responsible for providing care in the NICU as demonstrated by peer review journal articles and current professional reference books. These programs shall be provided as specified in the requirements for the Regional Cooperation Agreement, as per Section 3.25.3/B.3.
 - d. There shall be a method for monitoring attendance of all professionals involved in neonatal care at the monthly continuing education programs.
8. The latest editions of the following texts and documents shall be kept in the NICU:
- a. Red Book: Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases, Committee on Infectious Diseases, American Academy of Pediatrics;
 - b. Guidelines for Perinatal Care, American Academy of Pediatrics and The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AAP/ACOG);
 - c. Two current reference books pertaining to the care of the high risk infant;
 - d. One current reference book pertaining to critical care nursing of the high-risk infant;
 - e. CCS Manual of Procedures, Chapter 3.25, CCS Standards for Neonatal Intensive Care Units;
 - f. CCS Manual of Procedures, Chapter 3.3, CCS Standards for Hospitals;
 - g. Current listing of CCS medically eligible conditions; and
 - h. An annually updated Policies and Procedures Manual of the Intermediate NICU.

L. High Risk Infant Follow-up Program

- 1. The medical director of the NICU shall have the responsibility for ensuring that all high-risk infants discharged from the NICU are referred to an appropriate high risk infant follow-up (HRIF) program.
- 2. There shall be an organized HRIF program in the NICU's facility or there shall be a written agreement for the provision of services provided in high risk infant follow-up programs by another hospital or agency, including High Risk Infant Follow-up Special Care Centers.

3. The HRIF program shall conform with the CCS high risk infant eligibility criteria and components of service, as per the CCS Manual of Procedures, Chapter 2.17.2, CCS Medical Eligibility Criteria.