

APN's IN ESTONIAN PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

Gerli Liivet, RN, MSc

Nursing entrepreneur, WHO consultant, and
former Vice President of the Estonian Nurses Union

2026

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About me

STUDIES

- 2002 nurse,
Tallinn Medical School
- 2007 health/community nursing,
Tartu Health College
- 2015 Master of Health Sciences (nursing
leadership), University of Tartu

WORK EXPERIENCE

- 2001-2012 family nurse, Pirita Family Medical Center
- 2012-2017 lecturer, Tallinn Health Care College
- 2016-2026 Vice-president and Head of International Relations, Estonian Nurses Union
- Since 2020 entrepreneur
- 2026 WHO consultant and Quality Manager at Flegado Õenduskeskus OÜ.

In our Nursing Company, we provide primary care services such as school and home nursing.
We have 16 nurses who provide services to nearly 6,000 people.
We do not have any doctors in our institution, but we cooperate with
other healthcare specialists if necessary.



About Estonia

- Estonia, a country in Northern Europe, borders with Latvia, Russia and the Gulf of Finland.
- More than 1,500 islands, old-growth forest and many lakes.
- The capital, Tallinn, is known for its preserved Old Town, museums and the 314m-high Tallinn TV Tower, which has an observation deck.
- 94% of population uses the Internet regularly.
- 99% of people declared their income electronically, it takes only 2 min.
- More than 50% vote online.

Population: 1,36 million

Area: 45,338 km²

Founded: February 24, 1918



The Estonian Genome Center has collected the genome data of more than 200 000 individuals. This data will be used in personalized medicine, where genome data and health data collected in the health information system will be combined in order to offer specific diagnoses and treatments.



eHealth in Estonia

100% patients have a countrywide digital record

- ✓ digital prescription- 99% online
- ✓ digital health certificate
- ✓ digital registration for appointment's- National eBooking system
- ✓ digital referral for analysis, examination's, other service
- ✓ e-ambulance
- ✓ e-consultation
- ✓ remote appointment via the web and over the phone



EDUCATION

NURSE

- 3.5 years, including 90 EAP internships
- Bachelor's degree, accepted in the EU
- More general knowledge
- Possibility to work at all levels of healthcare

https://www.ena.ee/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/OK28nov2023_Oe_baaspadevused2023OK.pdf

APN

- 1.5 years, including 15 EAP internships
- Master of Health Sciences
- More specific knowledge
 - **Mental health nursing**
 - **Public health nursing**
 - Intensive care nursing
 - Clinical care nursing

https://www.ena.ee/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/BC_APNs_OK.pdf

To work in healthcare, you need to register your education in the national register.



STATISTICS

- ✓ A total of **16 847 nurses in the database** (26.06.2026)
- ✓ In 2024, approximately **9,370 nurses worked** in healthcare.
- ✓ 70% of nurses work in the public sector and 30% in the private sector.
- ✓ 96% of working nurses are women and 4% are men.
- ✓ 0.2% of nurses working in Estonia have received their professional education abroad.
- ✓ 8.9% are older than 65 years of age, 46% are aged 45-64 years of age and therefore 45% are under 44 years of age, the average age is 46.2 years of age.

SPECIALITY	01.10. 2019	22.09. 2022	29.05. 2023	21.06. 2026
Public health nursing	141	177	215	248
Clinical nursing	127	170	208	243
Intensive care nursing	265	301	325	352
Mental health nursing	123	163	216	246
AMOUNT	656	811	964	1089



NURSES AND APN's WORK

In primary health care

- In family medicine
- In the emergency room
- In the ambulance
- In home nursing
- In schools
- In care homes
- In dentistry
- In the Defense Forces
- In prison service

In specialist care

- In a hospital, including a nursing hospital
- In ambulatory

IN ADDITION, in the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Health Insurance Fund, the Health Board, higher education institutions, the university, the social system, the social and health departments of cities.



Rights and responsibilities

In Estonia, the practice of nurses and APNs is primarily distinguished by the scope of their responsibilities. All nurses, including APNs, in Estonia have the right to **prescribe aids**, nurses working in outpatient settings can **open and close sick leave certificates**.

APNs have additional rights:

- order necessary tests and X-rays, etc;
- refer patients to another specialist;
- conduct e-consultations;
- extend repeat prescriptions;
- coordinate patients' care pathways.

If there is also a **mental health nurse** in the team, she has the right to offer certain types of therapies and interventions for which she is competent.

In the ambulance, **brigade leaders** are usually APNs. In emergency departments, **triage is carried out** by APNs.

Nursing care is in Estonia, in all level, a process-based healthcare service that consists of:

- ✓ **assessing and monitoring** the patient's health status and needs;
- ✓ determining a **nursing diagnosis** (problem);
- ✓ establishing expected nursing **outcomes**;
- ✓ **planning and implementing** nursing activities and procedures;
- ✓ **evaluating** nursing outcomes;
- ✓ **documenting** health data.

Nurses and APNs are autonomous in activities within their competence, and appointments are held without the presence of a doctor.

- When working in **family nursing**, the scope of activities is agreed upon in the team.
- **In home nursing**, initial guidelines are provided with a referral, but there is freedom to make decisions regarding further interventions based on the patient's health needs.
- **Nurses working in schools** have the authority to decide on immunizations and interventions based on health status.
- **APNs working in all primary care areas can use their extended rights**, except that prescriptions are not renewed by the school and home nurse or in the ambulance service.





PIRITA FAMILY CENTER

7 GPs
14 family nurse's (incl home nurse)
Midwife
2 reception staff
Gynecologist's appointment
Center for Psychiatry
Dental care
Physiotherapy services
Salt chamber
Conference room for 25 people

Photo: Pirita Family Medicine Center



FUTURE CHALLENGES

- ✓ Expansion of APN prescription rights.
- ✓ Right to prescribe medical devices.
- ✓ Greater role of APN at primary level - right to sign driver's health certificate and other documents, the preparation of which and the accompanying health assessments and decisions are already a daily activity of APN today.



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