



**Advances in the nursing in primary health care specialty in Chile****Avances en la especialidad de enfermería en atención primaria en salud en Chile****Avanços na especialidade de enfermagem na atenção primária à saúde no Chile****Valeria Aravena Machuca**<sup>1a</sup> <sup>1</sup> Universidad Católica del Maule, Curicó, Chile.<sup>a</sup> **Corresponding Author:** varavenam@ucm.cl **Cite as:** Aravena Machuca V. Advances in the nursing in primary health care specialty in Chile. Rev. chil. enferm. 2024;6:75148. <https://doi.org/10.5354/2452-5839.2024.75148>

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The Nursing profession in Chile is currently experiencing significant advancement towards formally recognizing specialties. Recently, oncology nursing has been incorporated into *Sistema de Certificación de Especialidades de Prestadores Individuales de Salud* (Certification System for Health Provider Specialties).<sup>1</sup> In this context, efforts are underway to establish a regulatory framework to certify additional specializations. The Chilean Association of Education in Nursing (ACHIEEN), the Nurses' Association, and Scientific Societies are collaborating to meet the requirements for establishing a structure that formally recognizes the scientific and technical competencies of nursing professionals. This progress is expected to enhance the sector, career development, financial compensation, and job stability within the nursing specialties.

The recent amendment to Supreme Decree No. 8 of the Chilean Ministry of Health (MINEDUC), which governs the certification of health specialties, marks a historic milestone with the inclusion of the first officially recognized nursing specialty. This underscores the critical role that nurses play in the comprehensive care of oncology patients and reflects the commitment to continuously improving healthcare quality in Chile.<sup>1</sup> There are continuous efforts to recognize other specialties such as geriatrics, gerontology, and family and community health. This legal endorsement is crucial for validating these specialties' relevance and boosting investment in the ongoing education and training of nursing professionals.

In this regard, several universities in Chile, including Universidad Católica del Maule (UCM), have committed to contributing to the training process. UCM has recently seen its first cohort of Primary Health Care nurses graduate, comprised of four professionals. The Primary Health Care Nursing

Specialty program at UCM began in the first semester of 2023 and was designed to address the emerging needs of Chile's healthcare system and its population. Targeted at nursing professionals, this program focuses on community health, enabling nurses to lead the care of patients, families, and communities based on evidence and territorial relevance.

Training in this specialty aligns with Chile's Family and Community Comprehensive Health Care Model (MAIS for its acronym in Spanish, *Modelo de Atención Integral de Salud*), which places families and communities at the center of care. This approach emphasizes effective implementation in primary-level centers, providing necessary management tools to develop comprehensive and humane healthcare. MAIS highlights the importance of family- and community-centered care, promoting a holistic approach to address the population's health needs and strengthening the healthcare system's capacity to respond to emerging challenges.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to note that implementing nursing specialization programs significantly improves the quality of healthcare services. According to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), strengthening primary care is essential for achieving universal health coverage and improving the health of populations in Latin America. This approach advocates for investment in the training and education of health professionals, which is crucial for developing a more equitable and effective healthcare system.<sup>2</sup>

The four nurses who comprise the first cohort of specialists in Primary Health Care are already creating meaningful impact in their communities. For instance, one graduate has implemented a pioneering Telehealth program at the Family Health Center (CESFAM) in Molina, in the Maule region. This program has enabled the application of advanced competencies in care management, implementing community health programs, and promoting humanized health services. Telehealth has improved access to healthcare services for the community in Molina and optimized care management through information and communication technologies.

The first group of Primary Health Care nursing specialists from UCM reflects the institution's commitment to academic excellence and strong community service. It is expected that these efforts will contribute to forming nursing teams capable of advancing a stronger and more equitable healthcare system.

This reflection calls upon all institutions and healthcare professionals to continue supporting and promoting specialized nursing training to ensure quality and accessible care for the population. It marks the beginning of a new era for primary care nursing in Chile, highlighting the importance of investing in high-quality professional education. I extend my gratitude to all who have been part of this process and reaffirm my commitment to the continuous improvement of primary healthcare in our country.

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