



Nursing and midwifery in general practice

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation supports the employment of nurses and midwives in general practice for the provision of primary health care. The ANMF have developed *National Practice Standards for Nurses in General Practice* (the Standards) and an accompanying toolkit. The toolkit can be used for self-appraisal against the Standards to determine continuing professional development needs.¹

The employment of nurses and midwives in general practice:

- enhances the range of services available to people attending general practice;
- contributes positively through collaborative care to health outcomes for people attending general practice;
- incorporates the diverse scope of practice of nurses and midwives into the general practice environment; and
- provides clinical and collegial support to health professionals in the general practice setting.

It is the position of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. All nurses and midwives employed as such in general practice must be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia.
2. All nurses and midwives employed in general practice must have a clear position description and scope of practice that is appropriate to their educational preparation consistent with national and jurisdictional legislative frameworks.
3. Enrolled nurses work under the direction and supervision of registered nurses. Enrolled nurses employed within general practice must have clear and appropriate supervisory arrangements in place with a registered nurse. That supervision may be direct or indirect.^{2 3 4}
4. Evidence based policies and protocols must be developed which give direction to the nurse or midwife, establish the boundaries and expectations of their role and are applied using their professional judgement.
5. Nurses and midwives employed in general practice, as in any other area of nursing or midwifery, will bring to their employment a range of skills and knowledge. The scope of practice of the nurse or midwife can be enhanced through further education. The employer has a responsibility to ensure that nurses and midwives within their employ are provided with appropriate education and continuing professional development opportunities in order to build capacity and function safely and effectively.
6. Nurses and midwives must be employed according to the appropriate industrial instrument applicable in the states and territories in which they are working, at a level commensurate with their qualifications and scope of practice.
7. Nurses and midwives in general practice should be appropriately recognised and remunerated.



8. Nursing and midwifery care provided in general practice that attracts funding should be reimbursed at a level that reflects the skill and knowledge of nurses and midwives.
9. Mechanisms should be in place to facilitate contact between the nurse or midwife in general practice and other nurses and midwives working in similar or other primary health care roles in the local area to provide professional support, exchange information and ideas, and facilitate involvement in ongoing professional development activities.
10. Nurses and midwives in general practice are not accountable to non-nurse/midwife practice managers for clinical decisions and outcomes.

*Endorsed 2001
Reviewed and re-endorsed February 2005
Reviewed and re-endorsed May 2008
Reviewed and re-endorsed June 2011
Reviewed and re-endorsed February 2015
Reviewed and re-endorsed November 2017
Reviewed and re-endorsed November 2020*

References

1. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (2014). *National practice standards for nurses in general practice*. Melbourne: ANMF. Available at http://www.anmf.org.au/documents/National_Practice_Standards_for_Nurses_in_General_Practice.pdf
2. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2020), *Decision-making framework for nursing and midwifery*. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/julianeb/Downloads/Nursing-and-Midwifery-Board---Framework---Decision-making-framework-for-nursing-and-midwifery---Advance-copy%20\(3\).PDF](file:///C:/Users/julianeb/Downloads/Nursing-and-Midwifery-Board---Framework---Decision-making-framework-for-nursing-and-midwifery---Advance-copy%20(3).PDF)

Direct supervision: the registered nurse or midwife is actually present, personally observes, works with, guides and directs the person who is being supervised. The supervisor takes direct and principal responsibility for the nursing or midwifery care provided (e.g. assessment and/or treatment of individual patients/clients).

Indirect supervision: the registered nurse or midwife works in the same facility or organisation as the supervised person, but does not constantly observe their activities. The supervisor must be available for reasonable access. What is reasonable will depend on the context, the needs of the person receiving care and the needs of the person who is being supervised. The supervisor and supervisee share the responsibility for individual patients. The supervisor is easily contactable and is available to observe and discuss the nursing or midwifery care the supervisee is delivering.
3. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2016). *Registered nurse standards for practice*. <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Professional-standards.aspx>
4. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2016). *Enrolled nurse standards for practice*. <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Professional-standards.aspx>