Developing National Practice Standards for Nurses in General Practice

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Project funded by the Australian Government Department of Health
• **Nurse Practitioners** – Masters prepared within specific scope of practice

• **Registered Nurses** – Baccalaureate prepared

• **Enrolled Nurses** – Diploma prepared

• **Assistants in Nursing** – Short course, non-regulated
Competency (professional practice) standards articulate the scope of practice of a nurse.

- Purposes of Standards
  - a framework for curricula development
  - assessment of student performance
  - communicate scope of practice to others
  - assess an individuals' competence to practice.
• Australian general practices are largely small businesses where the GP Practice owner employs staff.

• The nursing workforce in Australian general practice has grown exponentially in the last decade.

• A major barrier to teamwork has been role confusion & role ambiguity relating to the nurses’ role & scope of practice.
Aim: To revise the competency standards for Australian general practice nurses.

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.

Managed by Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation.

Research Partner: University of Wollongong.
Methods

1. Focus Groups - 200 participants in 14 groups
2. Online Survey – 561 responses across two surveys
3. Advisory Group – key experts & stakeholders
4. Reference Group – experienced general practice nurses
• 14 focus groups

Canberra   Albany
Wollongong  Perth
Sydney      Cairns
Hobart      Mackay
Ulverstone  Brisbane
Melbourne   Adelaide
Busselton   Clare
On-line Surveys

• 561 responses across two surveys

• Survey 1 - identified perceived gaps in current Standards.

• Survey 2 - tested the Revised Standards.
  – All standards received a mean rating ≥3.5 indicating a perceived very good fit
Key Findings

1. **Language of the Current Standards**
   - Wording not accessible to the target audience
   - UK standards - clearer wording but list tasks

2. **Focus of Standards**
   - how do they convey the breadth of the nurses’ role and the role of others?
   - current best practice, usual practice or be aspirational?
3. Need to distinguish “levels of performance”
   - Not all nurses perform at the same level

4. EN Role
   - Lack of understanding around role differentiation
   - Supervision requirements unclear
• Intended to provide guidance around the nursing role specific to the general practice setting.

• Aimed at Registered & Enrolled Nurses.

• Assist in differentiating the roles between Enrolled Nurses, Registered Nurses & Registered Nurses (Advanced Practice).
Structure

• Domains
  – Domain 1: Professional Practice
  – Domain 2: Nursing Care
  – Domain 3: General Practice Environment
  – Domain 4: Collaborative Practice

• Standards – 22 Practice Standards

• Performance Indicators – for EN, RN, RN (Advanced Practice)
STANDARD 2
Provides nursing care consistent with current nursing and general practice standards, guidelines, regulations and legislation.

Performance Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrolled Nurse [EN]</th>
<th>Registered Nurse [RN]</th>
<th>Registered Nurse Advanced Practice</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Identifies current NMBA EN standards for practice.</td>
<td>2.1 Identifies current NMBA RN standards for practice.</td>
<td>2.10 Critically evaluates how standards, guidelines, regulations and/or legislation can be translated and integrated into practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2 Practises within individual scope of practice.</td>
<td>2.2 Practises within individual scope of practice.</td>
<td>2.11 Mentors other nurses and health professionals in the application of specific standards, guidelines, regulations and/or</td>
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<td>2.3 Undertakes delegated clinical tasks under the supervision of an RN.</td>
<td>2.3 Identifies current NMBA EN standards for practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4 Seeks advice from the supervising RN when</td>
<td>2.4 Provides appropriate supervision and delegation of clinical</td>
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Toolkit

- Professional Development
  - Self-assessment / peer appraisal tool
  - Professional development plan and CPD record

- Practice Resources
  - Sample position descriptions
  - Sample advertisements
  - Sample interview questions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Standard met</th>
<th>Standard not yet met</th>
<th>Further development required</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Demonstrates an understanding of primary health care principles and nursing in general practice</td>
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<td>1.1 Identifies the core principles of primary health care.</td>
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<td>1.2 Integrates the principles of primary health care into their practice.</td>
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<td>1.3 Understands current national health priorities.</td>
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<td>1.4 Recognises the impact of the socio-determinants of health on consumers and integrates this understanding in the planning and delivery of nursing care.</td>
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<td>1.5 Identifies the broad health and social needs of the Practice community.</td>
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<td>1.6 Articulates the various roles and responsibilities of the general practice team, in particular the RN and EN scopes of practice and EN supervision requirements.</td>
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Conclusion

• Defining scope of practice is a key strategy to reduce role confusion & ambiguity.

• Nurses work best when facilitated to work to their full scope of practice.

• Understanding nursing roles can improve service delivery, job satisfaction, recruitment & retention of nurses.

• Work needs to go beyond developing standards to include explicit strategies for embedding these in the workplace.
National Practice Standards for Nurses in General Practice


