



licensing of assistants in nursing (however titled)

Assistants in nursing (however titled) are supervised and delegated aspects of nursing care by registered nurses. Registered nurses assess the competence of, supervise and delegate aspects of nursing care to assistants in nursing. This position statement should be read in conjunction with the ANF position statement on Assistants in nursing or midwifery and other unlicensed workers (however titled) providing aspects of nursing or midwifery care and the ANF guideline on Delegation by registered nurses and midwives.

Titles include assistants in nursing, Health Assistants in Nursing, personal care assistants and personal carers. These employees provide direct care and aspects of nursing care to people who are aged, frail, have disabilities or illnesses. Assistants in nursing (however titled) generally work in community and residential settings but some are employed in acute, sub-acute and primary health care settings.

It is the position of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. Regulation by licensing of assistants in nursing (however titled) should be introduced under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009.¹
2. As these workers provide aspects of nursing care and work with, report to and are supervised and directed by registered nurses and midwives, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) should be the body responsible for licensing.
3. Regulation of assistants in nursing (however titled) by licensing will ensure:
 - A minimum level of knowledge and education;
 - A minimum standard of nursing care and the establishment of a mechanism for accountability;
 - The protection of the public;
 - That legal action can be taken with regard to those whose conduct and/or competence is less than the required standard (such as: conditions applied to registration; suspension or cancellation of registration; or removal from the register to practice).
 - The establishment of nationally consistent professional practice competency standards;
 - The application of fair and transparent assessment for those applying for a licence to practise as assistants in nursing (however titled);
 - The identification of a scope of practice for assistants in nursing (however titled);

- The provision of a process to inform individuals receiving nursing care from assistants in nursing (however titled) that the worker is competent to provide the care; and
 - Support for registered nurses who are working with assistants in nursing (however titled) to delegate particular aspects of nursing care appropriately.
4. Representation on the Board of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) should occur as part of the legislative changes, so that assistants in nursing (however titled) are appropriately represented and their specific needs are addressed by the national body.

endorsed may 2005

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reference

1. Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 which was enacted on 1 July 2010.
Available at: <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/H/HealthPracRNA09.pdf>