



nursing in general medical practice

Where the term 'nurse' is used it includes all licensed classifications including, but not limited to: registered nurse, midwife, enrolled nurse, nurse practitioner.

The Australian Nursing Federation supports the employment of nurses in general medical practice, as an important area for the provision of primary health care.

The employment of nurses in general medical practice will:

- provide clinical and collegial support to general medical practitioners;
- demonstrate to general medical practitioners the diverse range of nursing skills and knowledge;
- enhance the range of services available to people attending a particular general medical practice;
- contribute positively to health outcomes for people attending a particular general medical practice; and
- provide another choice in career path for nurses.

It is the position of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. All nurses employed in general medical practice must be licensed either as a registered nurse or an enrolled nurse with the nurse regulatory authority in the state or territory in which they are working.
2. All nurses employed in general medical practice must have a clear role description with a scope of practice that is appropriate to the educational preparation of the nurse and consistent with the legislative framework of the state or territory in which the nurse is employed.
3. Enrolled nurses employed within general medical practice must have clear and appropriate supervisory arrangements in place and work within a scope of practice that is consistent with their educational preparation. Enrolled nurses work under the direction and supervision of registered nurses. That supervision may be direct or indirect¹.
4. Policies and protocols must be developed which give direction to the nurse, establish the boundaries and expectations of the role to be undertaken, and are applied using the professional judgement of the nurse.
5. Nurses employed in general medical practice, as in any other specialty area of nursing, will bring to their employment a range of skills and knowledge. Nurses employed in a particular post registration specialty area of nursing practice must have the qualifications and skill to practise competently in that specialty area of practice, eg midwives providing antenatal and postnatal care.

6. Nurses 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. The employment of nurses in general medical practice should accommodate practice from beginner to expert and provide a career path, appropriately recognised and remunerated, from beginner to expert. This will include such roles as enrolled and registered nurses (undertaking generalist functions within a single medical practice), registered nurses employed as clinical nurse specialists or clinical nurse consultants (attached to a single medical practice and undertaking functions in a specific specialist area of nursing), registered nurses employed as clinical nurse consultants (providing specialist nursing services to a number of medical practices or a division of general practice), and registered nurses in advanced nursing practice roles (such as nurse practitioners).
8. As an employee, the nurse in general medical practice must be provided with indemnity under the vicarious liability insurance of the employer. No nurse who is an employee in general medical practice should be required to take out personal professional indemnity insurance.
9. Nursing care in general medical practice should be reimbursed and at a level that reflects the skill and knowledge of nurses.
10. Mechanisms should be in place to facilitate contact between the nurse in general medical practice and other nurses working in the local area to provide professional support; exchange information and ideas; and facilitate involvement in ongoing professional development activities.

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¹ Direct supervision: the registered nurse is actually present, observes, works with and directs the person who is being supervised. Indirect supervision: the registered nurse is easily contactable but does not directly observe the activities.