



anf position  
statement

# australian nursing federation

## resolution of nursing and midwifery practice concerns in the workplace

This position statement refers to nursing or midwifery practice concerns in any workplace situation that:

- is beyond the ability of the individual nurse or midwife to resolve;
- restricts the nurse or midwife's ability to deliver optimal care; and
- has caused or poses potential risk of causing injury to staff, patients/clients/residents.

Examples of such concerns include:

- unrealistic performance expectations;
- poor physical layout of the work setting;
- staffing which is inadequate in number and inappropriate in skill level and mix;
- lack of supplies, services and other resources;
- unsafe practices of other health care professionals;
- lack of written policies or standards to provide direction and support for nursing or midwifery practice; or
- conflict between health professionals about practice matters.

It is the position of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. It is the responsibility of employers, within their duty of care, to establish and operate mechanisms for the resolution of nursing and midwifery practice concerns.
2. All nurses and midwives have a duty of care to their patients/clients/residents and a responsibility to themselves and other nurses and midwives to raise with their employer, nursing and midwifery practice concerns.
3. Nurses and midwives should be involved in the development of health agency policies to assist the prevention and resolution of nursing and midwifery practice concerns.
4. Health agency policies for the resolution of nursing and midwifery practice concerns should be available and communicated to all nursing and midwifery staff.
5. When a nursing or midwifery practice concern of an urgent nature arises, and an individual is in danger, the nurse or midwife should:
  - 5.1 initiate action immediately in an attempt to resolve the situation;
  - 5.2 contact their immediate supervisor;
  - 5.3 specify the standards which may not have been met;

- 5.4 ask to be notified of action taken by management to remedy the situation, and prevent or minimise a recurrence; and
  - 5.5 ensure that documentation on the complaint and the resolution, is completed.
6. In situations where there is no immediate danger, the nurse or midwife should:
- 6.1 identify the standards<sup>1</sup> that were not met;
  - 6.2 communicate the concern in terms of the standards that cannot be or are not being met and their actual or potential effect on patients/clients/residents, ensuring all relevant information is provided;
  - 6.3 fully document the concern and to whom it was referred for action and when;
  - 6.4 request feedback from the person to whom the concern was referred and any follow up action taken to resolve the issue and the eventual outcome; and
  - 6.5 pursue the matter as far as possible until a satisfactory resolution is achieved.

*endorsed by federal council september 1994*

*reviewed and re-endorsed november 1996*

*reviewed and re-endorsed october 1998*

*reviewed and re-endorsed november 2006*

*reviewed and re-endorsed november 2009*

#### reference

1. Standards may include: competency standards for nurses and midwives; codes of professional conduct and ethics for nurses and midwives; occupational health and safety legislation/standards; organisational standards for patient/client/resident care; organisational or professional policies and procedures; etc.