

Independent Nurse Prescribing

The Medicines Amendment Act 1999 amends the Medicines Act 1981 to enable the making of regulations to:

- > Extend independent prescribing rights to defined classes of registered health professionals
- > Set out the minimum requirements for the use of standing orders prepared by a medical practitioner, dentist or midwife.

The Medicines Amendment Act also:

- > Enables the making of regulations requiring prescribers to maintain their competence.

The regulatory body, The Nursing Council of New Zealand, assesses applications and approves individual nurses as independent nurse prescribers, maintains the register and monitors ongoing competence.

Who May Prescribe?

- > Independent Nurse Prescribing will only be allowed within scopes of practice which have been approved by the government and are specified in the Medicines Regulations.
- > Independent Nurse Prescribers will only be approved within the Nursing Council Nurse Practitioner framework.
- > In addition to the five competencies for recognition as a Nurse Practitioner, the applicant will need to demonstrate a further prescribing competency.
- > Individual application is made to the Nursing Council.
- > Approval as an independent prescriber is valid for 5 years.
- > Independent Nurse Prescribers will be able to prescribe only within the specified scope of practice and the identified classes of medications.

What Do I Need to Become An Independent Nurse Prescriber?

- > Be a Registered Nurse holding a New Zealand Annual Practising Certificate
- > Have a minimum of four or five years experience in a particular clinical field
- > Have a Clinical Masters degree or equivalent inclusive of the required nurse prescribing Papers
- > Prepare a portfolio providing evidence that the Nurse Practitioner and the Nurse Prescribing competencies have been met
- > Attend an interview with a Nursing Council Nurse Practitioner assessment panel
- > Possibly undertake a clinical viva.

- > Be approved by Nursing Council as a Nurse Practitioner and a Nurse Prescriber within a specified scope of practice

Detailed information in the Nursing Council of New Zealand Publication "The Nurse Practitioner: responding to health needs in New Zealand". March 2001

How Are Prescribing Scopes of Practice Approved?

- > Nursing groups approach the Nursing Council expressing an interest in having their scope of practice recognised for nurse prescribing.
- > Nursing Council send a copy of their guidelines and template to be completed
- > Nursing group formally registers their interest with the Nursing Council and Ministry of Health.
- > Speciality nurses, guided by the Ministry of Health and Nursing Council develop a proposal. The proposal includes:
 - Definition of the scope of speciality practice.
 - Competencies and education required for the scope
 - Risks and benefits to consumers.
 - Associated tests and investigations for prescribing.
 - List of generic classes of medicine which can be prescribed
 - Evidence of wide consultation in development of the Proposal

NZNO Professional Nursing Advisors can assist with this work.

Proposal submitted to Nursing Council for assessment against Nursing Council either:

- > Refers the proposal back for further work or forwards the proposal to the Minister of Health with a recommendation that the scope be approved
- > The Minister of Health forwards the proposal to the Minister's Prescribes Advisory Committee for advice
- > The Minister forwards the proposal with a recommendation to Cabinet
- > Cabinet has final approval of the proposal and then the scope of practice is specified in the Medicines Regulations

What Scopes of Practice Have Been Approved?

- > Aged Care
- > Child Family Health

Proposals are being developed for the following scopes:

- > Diabetes Care
- > Respiratory Care
- > Sexual and Reproductive Health
- > Palliative Care
- > Occupational Health
- > Mental Health

What Other Information is Relevant?

- > The Nurse Prescriber's practicing certificate will specify that the nurse is registered as a Nurse Practitioner and Nurse Prescriber and the scope of practice
- > Nursing Council will specify requirements for maintenance of a competency based practising certificate for Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Prescribers
- > Professional indemnity insurance will be a necessity
- > Nurse Prescribers will be subject to the same monitoring processes as current prescribers
- > The prerequisite nurse prescribing education papers must be approved by the Nursing Council - check with the education provider that approval has been gained before enrolling.

Please contact either the Nursing Council of New Zealand or NZNO Professional Nursing Advisors for further information.

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Mission statement

NZNO is committed to the representation of members and the promotion of nursing and midwifery. NZNO embraces Te Tiriti o Waitangi and works to improve the health status of all peoples of Aotearoa/ New Zealand through participation in health and social policy development.

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