



**POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**FOR**

**PRIMARY HEALTH NURSES /  
PRACTICE NURSES**

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# **POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR PRIMARY HEALTH NURSES / PRACTICE NURSES**

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# INTRODUCTION

The scope of Primary Health/Practice Nursing is extensive. In recognition of the changes that have occurred in Primary Health/Practice Nursing and the delivery of Primary Health Care in New Zealand since the implementation of the Primary Health Care Strategy (MOH 2002), this Position Description is based on the NZNO Primary Health Care Nurses Council Professional Development Recognition Programme framework (2005).

The New Zealand College of Practice Nurses NZNO, as articulated in their strategic plan, has a commitment to clinical excellence in primary health/practice nursing and the development and co-ordination of educational programmes designed to facilitate the highest possible standards of nursing practice.

In 2005, the rules for membership to the NZCPN were widened to reflect the recognition of the members that practice nursing was but one of the sub specialties that primary health nursing encompassed. The NZCPN strives to ensure that the organisation meets their vision to unite, empower and advocate for all primary health nurses in New Zealand. This position description is one of the tools for assisting in meeting this vision.

The NZCPN National Committee recognise that there are sub specialties not yet included in this document but acknowledge that this is a living document which will evolve as the College evolves over time and through change in membership.

We acknowledge and are thankful for the contributions from Te Runanga o Aotearoa, Regional Divisions of the New Zealand College of Practice Nurses, NZNO and individual Practice Nurses and Primary Health Nurses throughout New Zealand.

# PHILOSOPHY

Nursing is a profession concerned with enhancing the abilities of individuals and groups to achieve their health potential within the realities of their life situations.

Primary health/Practice Nursing is a sub speciality within nursing concerned with primary health care provision for individuals; the family and the community, with practice nursing in particular based within a general practice setting. As the Primary Health Care Strategy (MOH 2001) is implemented throughout NZ, the funding and employment structures that currently support practice nursing may change. The vision is that primary health care nurses may work from a variety of locations, in many community settings, integrating with other providers to ensure seamless nursing service delivery that is patient focussed. Primary health care nurses will be directed by evidence-based practice and will assume responsibility and accountability for their own practice. Their education and nursing skill base will support them in making sound clinical decisions, identifying and managing common conditions, and co-ordinating consultation and referrals (MOH 2003).

## **Definition of a Primary Health Care Nurse (MOH 2003)**

*Primary health care nurses are registered nurses with knowledge and expertise in primary health care practice. Primary health care nurses work autonomously and collaboratively to promote, improve, maintain and restore health. Primary health care nursing encompasses population health, health promotion, disease prevention, wellness care, first-point-of-contact care and disease management across the lifespan. The setting and the ethnic and cultural grouping of the people determine models of practice. Partnership with people, individuals, whānau, communities and populations, to achieve the shared goal of health for all, is central to primary health care nursing.*

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION OF A PRIMARY HEALTH/PRACTICE NURSE**

### **Key Responsibilities/Competencies**

**I) *The Primary Health Care nurse accepts responsibilities for ensuring that their nursing practice and conduct meets ethical and relevant legislative requirement- acting as a resource, role model or leader as appropriate:***

- Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (HPCA), 2003
- Health & Disability Commissioner Act, 1994, and Code of Health and Disability Consumers Rights, 1996
- Privacy Act, 1993, & Health Information Privacy Code, 1994
- Health & Disability (safety) Act, 2001
- NCNZ Code of Conduct
- Other legislation specific to your practice environment, e.g. Mental Health Act

Complying with Nursing Council of NZ regulations and area policies when making decisions regarding delegation of care and providing direction to nurse assistants, enrolled nurses, caregivers and others and seek advice appropriately

Have knowledge of and accesses area policies to guide nursing practice and ensure consistency for the client, respecting the clients right to choose care

Apply ethical principles and reflection in own nursing practice

Discuss and seek guidance on professional/ethical/social/cultural issues related to health care/nursing practice

**II) *The Primary Health Care nurse promotes an environment that ensures the safety of clients / health team members and others, acting as a resource, role model or leader as appropriate.***

Identify and manage risk as applicable to

- Infection control/ communicable disease
- Health and safety / environmental issues (i.e. Cold chain policy)
- Restraint minimization and safe practice (NZS 8141:2001)
- Incident reporting
- Cultural safety
- Physical safety of clients /self/ others
- Client non compliance
- Security

Implement nursing responses and policies for risk management within area of practice

Recognise and respond to changes in client health status including critical or unexpected events, being able to initiate appropriate / immediate response

**III) *The Primary Health Care nurse accepts responsibility for ensuring that their nursing practice meets the standards of the nursing profession, acting as a resource, role model or leader as appropriate.***

Participate in evaluation of own clinical and cultural practice, seeking guidance and support with your practice

Ensure practice is evidence based and incorporates feedback from health team members

Are proactive in seeking professional development opportunities to extend knowledge

**IV) *The Primary Health Care nurse participates in continuous quality improvement activities to monitor and improve standards of nursing acting as a resource, role model or leader as appropriate.***

Incorporate quality improvement principles into own nursing practice. (e.g. peer review, and professional clinical supervision)

Identify and participate in quality improvement activities within practice environment, challenging situations/ practices that do not meet required quality standards such as clinical audit, consumer survey, implementing changes in practice as required

**V) *Primary Health Care nurses use a wellness focus when applying the nursing process to achieve identified client outcomes acting as a resource, role model or leader as appropriate.***

Maintain therapeutic relationships and professional boundaries in your nursing practice, in a culturally safe manner

Use evidence based practice and a wellness focus to assess, plan, implement and evaluate a holistic plan of care including taha wairua (the spiritual side), taha hinengaro (thoughts and feelings), taha tinana (the physical side), taha whanau (family) (Te Whare Tapa Wha) being in partnership with the client and health care team, to address health inequalities

Recognise the importance of and utilise alternative processes for Māori and non Māori to enhance the partnership, seeking guidance and support as required e.g.: karakia

Maintain clear concise timely accurate and current client records within a legal and ethical framework

Demonstrate responsibility/ accountability/ competence and knowledge of medication administration, evidence based treatments and interventions used in client care

Demonstrate the use of time management skills to plan and prioritise own workload

**VI) *Primary Health Care nurses enable individuals and communities to increase control over the determinants of health acting as a resource, role model or leader as appropriate.***

Are proactive in health promotion, illness prevention and management applying your nursing practice, knowledge of community based practice and community development

Use goals, objectives, strategies, cultural safety and evidence based practice as key elements in the planning and presentation of a health promotion activity

Use tikanga Māori concepts relevant to health promotion practices seeking assistance as necessary

**VII) *Primary Health Care nurses provide health education appropriate to the needs of the client acting as a resource, role model or leader as appropriate.***

Ensure that education to the client is consistent, timely, culturally safe and appropriate for their needs and follows current evidence and guidelines and that the client understands relevant information related to their health care

Using appropriate resources, demonstrate formal and informal methods of teaching appropriate to the client/group

Provides access for Māori to resources and education incorporating the Māori world view, te Reo Māori me ōnā tikanga.

**VIII) *Primary Health Care nurses communicate effectively with clients and health team members acting as a resource, role model or leader as appropriate.***

Use a variety of communication skills to establish rapport and trust with the client accessing culturally appropriate services if necessary e.g.: interpreter/kaumatua



Demonstrate skills in problem solving and / or conflict resolution and seeks assistance as required

Advocate for the client, when the client requests support or has limited abilities in decision making

***IX) Primary Health Care Nurses work in collaboration with other health professionals to offer access to comprehensive services that improve, maintain and restore health acting as a resource, role model or leader as appropriate.***

Contribute a nursing perspective to and participates with other members of the health care team, to meet the NZ health strategy population health objectives (Primary Health objectives)

Collaborate, consult with and provide accurate information to the client and other health professionals about the prescribed interventions or treatments

Co-ordinate, maintain and document timely information to health team members necessary to maximise health outcomes for the client

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

This is the acceptance of responsibilities of conduct and behaviour to self, profession, client, employer and the community as a whole.

## **ACCREDITATION**

The professional recognition that a nurse has attained a set of predetermined standards within a speciality area of practice and demonstrates continued maintenance and development of professional standards through a systematic and regular review process.

## **ADVOCATE**

A person who stands alongside and enables or removes barriers to the client's being able to self-determine their own health outcomes.

## **AUDIT**

The process whereby the results of an activity are evaluated to see if the expected level has been achieved as set out by present rules, guidelines or standards.

## **CLIENT**

The term client refers to *patient, customer, resident, turoro, whanau, family, community, tangata whaiora, carer, legal representative.*

## **COLLABORATIVE**

Describes a method by which health professionals and their clients work together to make joint decisions on health care provision.

## **COLLEGIAL**

Describes a relationship that is equal and complementary between practice nurses and other members of the Primary Health Care Team.

## **CULTURAL VALUES**

These are the morals, beliefs, attitudes and standards that derive from a particular cultural group.

## **HEALTH STATUS INDICATORS**

- (i) Objective measures including mortality, life expectancy by ethnicity, morbidity and disability.
- (ii) Subjective measures including social and mental wellbeing.
- (iii) Factors influencing health status including demography, lifestyle and human behaviour.

## **PRACTICE NURSE**

A Practice Nurse is a Registered Nurse (RN) who holds a current annual practising certificate and whose main focus is practice nursing in the delivery of Practice Nursing services in the Primary Health Care setting.

The Practice Nurse works as a member of the primary health care team and, with the family doctor, acts as a client's advocate. It is recognised that the role and function of the Practice Nurse may vary widely from practice to practice dependent on such factors as practice, population, special interests of the doctor and geographical location. As a member of the primary health care team the Practice Nurse is professionally accountable for all aspects of nursing care delivery.

## **POLICIES**

Procedures, guidelines, protocols and standards.

## **PRIMARY HEALTH CARE**

Primary health care is essential health care made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community by means acceptable to them through their full participation and at a cost that the community and country can afford. It forms an integral part of both the country's health system of which it is the nucleus and of the overall social and economic development of the community (Alma Ata definition).

## **RESOURCE UTILISATION REVIEWS**

A systematic process for reviewing the way resources are allocated and used with efficiency and effectiveness being the main criteria.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

A series of goals set to direct the actions of a particular group.

## **TELEPHONE TRIAGE**

The skill required competently assessing, advising and assigning urgency of intervention from telephoned client contacts.

## **TE TIRITI O WAITANGI**

The term refers to the indigenous version of the founding documents of the constitution of Aotearoa, which represents partnership, protection and participation.

## Foundation Documents

Ministry of Health (2001)	The Primary Health Care Strategy
Ministry of Health (2003)	Investing in Health- Whakatohutia te Oranga Tangata. A framework for activating primary health care nursing in New Zealand.
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## RECOMMENDED JOURNALS

*The Practice Nurse*

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