



Position statement **Role of the Nursing Support Worker**

The purpose of this position statement is to outline key issues relating to employment of Nursing Support Workers

NENZ support care delivery models and appropriate skill mix that ensures that patients/clients receive nursing care that is assessed, planned, provided and evaluated by registered nurses in order that safety, effective risk management processes and effective patient outcomes are achieved.

The primary relationship is between the registered nurse/midwife and the patient/client. Nursing care may only be provided by qualified nurses capable of coordinating care to achieve the best outcome of the patient/client. As registered health professionals, nurses are able to provide this range of care activities and may delegate aspects of the work to health service support workers when this work does not require professional judgement.

The use of nursing support workers within the health team ensures the most effective and efficient use of human resources to deliver affordable health care. The health service support worker must receive adequate training and this role does not replace the registered nurse / midwife. The health service support worker's role is task-specific and has defined boundaries.

The decision to delegate tasks is a professional judgement and should only occur after assessment of the patient/client, taking into account;

- patient/client safety and wellbeing
- the stability of the health status of the patient/client so that no component of care or task may be delegated that requires nursing or judgement and skill to ensure safety
- the nature of the patient/client's illness, treatment regime and their wishes
- the potential benefits and risks to the patient/client
- the registered nurse/midwife's ability to supervise the work
- the ability of the health service support workers to do the work.

The nursing profession defines and supervises the education, training and utilisation for any nursing support worker role involved in providing direct patient care. Educational programmes are not just simplified versions of the professional nursing curriculum, but specific to the learning needs of assistive nursing personnel.

Nursing support workers;

- work under the direction and delegation of the qualified nurse
- undertake activities that support the maintenance of the patient / client care environment and is an assistant to the qualified nurse
- do not undertake any nursing activity that requires independent and specialised knowledge, judgement and skill
- understand that no task may be re-delegated by another health service support worker



Nurses should be prepared to undertake the responsibilities of health team supervision and delegation of care so that delegation includes the right task, in the right circumstances to the right person with the right direction and communication followed by the right supervision.

Nurse Leader Considerations

Skill mix should be monitored to ensure adequate direction and delegation.

Key Documents

International Council of Nurses. Assistive or Support Nursing Personnel.

<http://www.icn.ch/psassistive.htm>

Nursing Council of New Zealand Delegation and direction guidelines (2011)