



## Administration of medicines

The framework for management of medicines is clearly outlined in the ANMF publication: *Nursing Guidelines: Management of Medicines in Aged Care (2013)*.<sup>1</sup>

While this document refers specifically to aged care settings, the principles outlined in the document apply to the administration of medicines in all settings where health care is provided.

### It is the position of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. The administration of medicines is a function of registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives. To promote safe care and competent practice a suitably qualified nurse or midwife must administer medicines to individuals who are:
  - unable to self-administer;
  - unable to take responsibility for decisions about when to take medicines and when not to take medicines.
2. Enrolled nurses and assistants in nursing work under the direction, supervision and delegation for all nursing activities of registered nurses. In accordance with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's *Enrolled nurse standards for practice*, enrolled nurses, can provide support and supervision to assistants in nursing\* and to others providing care. This includes support and guidance of assistants in nursing when directed to assist people to self-administer medicines.
3. Administration of medicines is within the ordinary scope of practice of all enrolled nurses, except for those who have a notation against their name on the register which reads 'Does not hold Board-approved qualification in administration of medicines' (NMBA, 2015).<sup>2</sup>
4. Persons other than registered nurses, midwives or enrolled nurses, such as enrolled nurses not authorised to administer medicines\*\* or assistants in nursing, may **only** assist the person to self-administer their medicines.
5. The only role of assistants in nursing in medicines use is that of assisting people who self-administer their medicines from pre-packaged dose administration aids. They should not be directed to work outside of this role and should not be involved in the administration of medicines to persons who have been assessed as unable to self-administer.
6. The safe management of medicines requires the registered nurse to assess the competence of the enrolled nurse or assistant in nursing in each situation. It is the role of the registered nurse to determine, after assessment of the patient/resident, the legality and appropriateness of delegation of medicine administration to an enrolled nurse qualified to do so, or, delegation of medicines assistance to an assistant in nursing. The NMBA decision-making framework (DMF)<sup>3</sup> should be used to guide this process. Enrolled nurses cannot delegate medicines assistance to an assistant in nursing.
7. Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances legislation (however titled) in Australia should ideally be consistent.

\*The term assistant in nursing also refers to care workers (however titled)

\*\*Enrolled nurses have completed the education to allow them to administer medicines. Those who are not educated to this level will have a notation on their registration which prohibits them from administering medications.

*Endorsed May 2003*  
*Reviewed and re-endorsed February 2005*  
*Reviewed and re-endorsed November 2008*  
*Reviewed and re-endorsed November 2011*  
*Reviewed and re-endorsed November 2015*  
*Reviewed and re-endorsed November 2018*

#### References

- 1 Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation. *Nursing Guidelines: Management of Medicines in Aged Care* 2013. Available at [http://anmf.org.au/documents/reports/Management\\_of\\_Medicines\\_Guidelines\\_2013.pdf](http://anmf.org.au/documents/reports/Management_of_Medicines_Guidelines_2013.pdf)
- 2 Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. 2016. Fact sheet on *Enrolled nurses and medicine administration*.
- 3 Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA). Decision Making Framework (DMF). Available at <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Frameworks.aspx>

To be read in conjunction with ANMF Position Statement: The use of dose administration aids by nurses.