



Information management and information technology¹

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. Each health and aged care facility provider should:
 - 1.1 have procedures and guidelines that comply with relevant national and state or territory legislation on privacy and personal information protection and electronic information security;
 - 1.2 have developed standards that are consistent with national standards for information management;
 - 1.3 ensure the procedures and guidelines are reviewed regularly including staff affected by the procedures and guidelines, and the standards are met by all persons with clinical and management responsibilities;
 - 1.4 publish its procedures, standards, and guidelines in relation to privacy and the protection of personal information;
 - 1.5 ensure any changes to procedures and guidelines are communicated to staff; and
 - 1.6 ensure that all procedures, guidelines and standards are accessible to staff.
2. Having regard to the many purposes for which information may be used, permanent records completed by nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing should be:
 - 2.1 legible, comprehensive, contemporaneous and accurate;
 - 2.2 objective;
 - 2.3 signed and dated;
 - 2.4 confidential;
 - 2.5 prepared in conjunction with, and validated by, the individual concerned whenever possible;
 - 2.6 relevant to the health care of the individual;
 - 2.7 prepared, with consideration and recognition that written information has implications for the health or aged care facility's duty of care;
 - 2.8 protected from defacement, damage, destruction or deletions; and
 - 2.9 in accordance with applicable legislation.
3. Procedures for nursing and midwifery information management should be developed and reviewed regularly by nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing in each health and aged care facility. Procedures developed should take account of:
 - 3.1 legislative requirements particularly in relation to the privacy and security of data;
 - 3.2 national standards of information management; and nursing / midwifery informatics²;
 - 3.3 the need to safeguard the integrity of documentation, data and records; and
 - 3.4 contemporary information systems.



4. Nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing should be involved in determining requirements for information technology systems which ensure both the effective use of nursing and midwifery resources and the enhancement of patient care.
5. All opportunities should be taken to identify, process, retrieve and use data in ways which will facilitate patient care, improve co-ordination of nursing and midwifery services, advance nursing and midwifery knowledge and develop nursing and midwifery practice.
6. In order to maximise the potential benefits of clinical information technology, the following issues must be adequately addressed in each health and aged care facility:
 - 6.1 the involvement of nurses and midwives in decisions about the acquisition of information systems prior to purchase;
 - 6.2 access to and infrastructure support so nurses and midwives can use relevant clinical information technology, internet connection should be available at all times;
 - 6.3 the allocation of sufficient resources to facilitate nurses and midwives to properly perform their duties, in particular when the nurse or midwife is working remotely from the health or aged care facility;
 - 6.3 the allocation of adequate resources for the appointment of information management co-ordinators with the appropriate skills to manage the change process associated with the introduction of clinical information systems for nursing and midwifery;
 - 6.4 the need for interface between nursing, midwifery and other health and aged care facility information systems to enhance continuity of care, reduce duplication of data input, maximise the use of data, and ensure the quality and integrity of data.
7. Monitoring of information management should be included in continuous quality improvement mechanisms.
8. Resources should be provided to enable nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing and other health and aged care facility staff to understand the professional and legal implications of nursing and midwifery documentation and to develop the skills necessary for the best possible management of information systems.
9. Development of appropriate information technology competence to meet the National Informatics Standards for nurses and midwives should be an integral part of all nursing and midwifery education.
10. Information technology in the form of social media should be used responsibly, and in a way that does not pose an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of any individual. Nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing who use facebook, twitter and all forms of social media, must do so in a way that is consistent with their obligation to practice in accordance with the professional Codes, Standards and Guidelines of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia³.

*endorsed June 1998
reviewed and re-endorsed February 2005
reviewed and re-endorsed May 2008
reviewed and re-endorsed June 2011
reviewed and re-endorsed February 2015*



Reference

1. The term information management refers to the collection, storage and exchange of data and information. Such data and information may be for clinical and/or management purposes. Information technology refers to the electronic technology which may be utilised for information management purposes.
2. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation – Federal Office. National Informatics Standards for nurses. Melbourne: ANMF Federal Office. Forthcoming 2015.
3. See ANMF Social Media Policy and Information Sheet