



Medical Practice Assistants

In some general practice environments, a medical practice assistant role has been introduced. This worker is providing administrative and clinical support, with variable, minimal educational preparation. Nurses and midwives provide comprehensive care to people attending general practice. Introduction of another level of clinical worker - the medical practice assistant is, redundant and places the public at risk.

Registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives are regulated health practitioners, whose practice is governed by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (the National Law). Under the National Law they:

- practise according to registration standards, standards for practice, regulatory guidelines, and codes of ethics and conduct,
- have a national minimum standard of education,
- undertake mandatory continuing professional development,
- are recorded on a publicly available registration database,
- ensure safe, quality and competent practice within their scope of practice.

Medical practice assistants are **not** regulated. This means that:

- they do not have a national standard of education
- they do not practice under a legislative framework
- there is no mandate for ongoing education to update knowledge
- there is no safety and quality framework underpinning their work
- there is no transparent way for the public to be assured of their skills or knowledge

Medical practice assistants **must** not undertake clinical care as this is the role of registered nurses, midwives and enrolled nurses in the general practice setting. Medical practice assistants cannot provide clinical direction, supervision or delegation to registered nurses, midwives or enrolled nurses.

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

1. People who attend a general practice have the right to safe, competent care by regulated health practitioners
2. Registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives provide safe, competent care within the Professional Practice Framework within which they practice, under the National Law. Eligibility for the Australian Government Practice Nurse Incentive Program (PNIP) payment, used to employ a nurse, requires that enrolled nurses be supervised by a registered nurse at all times.
3. The practice of registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives is safeguarded by the risk-based legislation of the National Law.
4. There is no evidence to support the introduction of another level of care worker into the general practice environment.
5. There is potential for general practices to mislead people who attend their clinics that the person in front of them is a registered nurse, enrolled nurse or a midwife



ANMF Position Statement

6. MPA positions should not replace registered nurse or enrolled nurse positions in general practice.
7. There are no safeguards for the public when a MPA undertakes aspects of clinical care in a general practice setting.

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Reference

1. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) Professional Practice Framework includes and is available at <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Codes-Guidelines.aspx>
 - Standards for practice – registered nurse (2016), enrolled nurse (2016), midwife (2018) and nurse practitioner (2014)
 - Registration standards – recency of practice; continuing professional development; professional indemnity insurance arrangements; criminal history; English language skills; endorsement as a nurse practitioner; endorsement for scheduled medicines for midwives; and endorsement for scheduled medicines for registered nurses (rural and isolated practice)
 - Code of Conduct for nurses 2018
 - International Council of Nurses (ICN) Code of Ethics for nurses 2018
 - Code of Conduct for midwives 2018
 - International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) Code of Ethics for midwives 2018
 - Decision making framework (DMF)
 - Guidelines for registration standards

To be read in conjunction with ANMF Position Statement: *Nursing and midwifery in general practice*