Consultation: Two proposals for registered nurse prescribing

Submission Form

Please read and refer to the consultation document Two proposals for registered nurse prescribing available on the Nursing Council of New Zealand website www.nursingcouncil.org.nz before completing this form. The questions in this form are designed to help you to focus your response and make it easier for us to analyse submissions. However, you don’t have to answer every question and may add additional comments.

This submission was completed by:

Name:
Address:
Email:
Organisation:
Position: Registered Nurse Emergency Department

If an email address is supplied, we will notify you of when the report of the summary of submissions is published on-line.

You are making this submission:
☐ as an individual
☐ on behalf of a group or organisation

Please indicate which part of the sector your submission represents:

☐ Individual nurse
☐ Individual doctor
☐ Individual other
☐ District Health Board
☐ Consumer group
☐ Registration authority
☐ Primary health organisation
☐ Maori health provider
☐ Pacific health organisation
☐ Government agency
☐ Education provider
☐ Professional organisation
☐ Private Hospital Provider
☐ Aged care provider
☐ Non-government organisation
☐ Other (please specify) ...................................................................................................................................................................
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In the interests of a full and transparent consultation process, the Nursing Council intends to publish a report which may contain quotes from the submissions received. The Council may also publish the submissions received on this consultation document on its website. However, if you object to this publication or to the publication of your name (Please note that the names of individual submitters will not be published) tick one or both of the following boxes:

☐ I do not give permission for my submission to be published on-line.

☒ I do not give permission for my organisation’s name to be listed in the published summary of submissions.

The deadline for feedback is Friday 19 April 2013. Submissions are accepted in written and email form. Please save and send your submission to:

EmmaG@nursingcouncil.org.nz

Or post to:

Emma Gennard
Nursing Council of New Zealand
PO Box 9644, Wellington 6141
Consultation questions

The consultation questions are split into two parts specific to the two proposals. Respondents are asked to reply to questions about both proposals. There is an opportunity at the end of the questions to give general views on the consultation paper and models of nurse prescribing.

Proposal One: Community nurse prescribing

Proposal for community nurse prescribing

The Council believes that registered nurses working in schools, general practice, public health, Maori and Pacific Health providers, services for youth, family planning and other ambulatory services already have a significant role in health promotion, disease prevention and in the assessment and treatment of minor ailments and illnesses. The ability to prescribe a limited number of medicines would enhance the health services registered nurses are able to deliver to some patients in community and outpatient settings.

1.1 Do you agree with the proposal that suitably qualified and experienced registered nurses be able to prescribe a limited list of medicines to treat minor ailments and infections, and to promote health?

Yes ☐ No ☒

I agree with nursing council that community nurses have a large part to play in health promotion and the ability to prescribe basic medications would improve patient care and compliance. However I do not believe that nurses with 3 years clinical experience have enough experience and clinical judgement to prescribe medications. My understanding is the target group of patients for community nurses may have multiple co-morbidities and without an extensive understanding of these conditions, any addition of new medications could be detrimental to patient safety. If a proposal is accepted for community nurses to prescribe, I believe a minimum of post graduate diploma is essential to the knowledge of, and understanding of best practices for nurses. This should be an integral part of community nurses training to prescribe medications. My last concern would be regarding mentorship for learning the requirements for prescribing is too short for a thorough understanding of medications.

The rationale for extending nurse prescribing is to improve patient care without compromising patient safety; make it easier for patients to obtain the medicines they need; increase patient choice in accessing medicines; and make better use of the skills of health professionals.

1.2 Do you agree that community nurse prescribing will enable patients to receive more accessible, timely and convenient care?

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1 Health services provided on an outpatient basis to those who visit a hospital or another health care facility and depart after treatment on the same day.
I think community nurses are in the best position to offer accessible, affordable health care to those that are in high need. Prescribing would be an advantage but I believe this is an advanced skill, even for basic medications and should be in the domain of specialist nurses. With the increasing demands for primary services the ability for a nurse to effectively treat minor ailments, without the need of a medical practitioner would be beneficial.

Title for community nurse prescribing

The Council has used the title “community nurse prescribing” for this proposal but is aware that it may not best describe the nurses who may undertake this type of prescribing or the breadth of the prescribing authority.

1.3 Do you consider the title “community nurse prescribing” adequately describes and informs the public and other health professionals of the breadth of this prescribing authority?

I don’t think this gives the patients (community) any idea of the scope of practice the community nurse holds. ‘Community nurse with basic prescribing rights’ shows the breadth and depth of ability and skills.

Scope of practice and authorisation for community nurse prescribing

The Council is proposing to add the following sentence to the scope of practice for registered nurses to allow some registered nurses to be authorised for community nurse prescribing:

“Some nurses with additional experience education and training may be authorised by the Council to prescribe some medicines within their competence and area of practice.”

1.4 Do you agree with the suggested wording changes to the registered nurse scope of practice and with a prescribing authorisation being included in the scope of practice of registered nurses with community nursing prescribing authority?

I think this statement clearly identifies the community nurse as someone with more knowledge and education but I think the number of years should be included in this statement. This is not clearly documented in the Proposal Framework for Nurse Prescribing in the consultation document (diagram 1 pg 14). The qualification requirement is of 3 years clinical experience post graduation with no addition education or knowledge required.
Qualification and training for community nurse prescribing

It is proposed that community nurse prescribing courses should include up to 6 days of theory (online and workshop) and 3 days of prescribing practice with a doctor or nurse prescriber (authorised prescriber). A competence assessment with a doctor or nurse practitioner would be one of the course assessments that must be successfully completed before the nurse would be authorised by the Council to prescribe. The standards for community nurse prescriber courses are outlined on page 50 of the consultation document. The competencies that the registered nurse will be assessed against are on page 53.

1.5 Do you agree that the proposed education and training for community nurse prescribing is consistent with their scope of practice and their prescribing authority and will enable them to demonstrate competent and safe prescribing practice?

Yes ☐ No ☒

1.6 Do you agree with the course standards for community nurse prescribers?

Yes ☐ No ☒

1.7 Do you agree with the competencies for community nurse prescribers?

Yes ☐ No ☒

I don’t think there is a sufficient amount of proposed education for community nurses to adequately learn how to prescribe basic medications to guarantee patient safety. I believe nurses need a minimum of 2 postgraduate papers including an advanced pharmacology and advanced diagnostic reasoning to be able to prescribe medications safety. These courses are year in duration, the proposal of 6 days duration is completely inadequate, I believe the course standards could not possibly be met and understood in this short time. There needs to be a documented amount of mentoring hours needed to gain prescribing. The standards are well written and cover all aspects of learning, the competencies are all covered but I believe, should include more mentoring hours of a supervisor.

Entry criteria for courses leading to community nurse prescribing

The Council is proposing the following criteria to gain entry to a community nurse prescribing programme:

- The registered nurse must hold a current annual practising certificate and must have completed three years equivalent full time practice. At least one year must be in the area of practice she/he will be prescribing.
• The nurse must have support from his/her employer to undertake the prescribing course and must confirm that they will be able to prescribe in their work role at the completion of the course.
• The nurse must have the support of an identified authorised prescriber mentor who will support her/him to prescribe.
• The nurse must be employed by an organisation that supports nurse prescribing through policy, audit, peer review and accessibility of continuing education.

1.8 Do you agree with the entry criteria for community nurse prescribing courses?
Yes ☐ No ☒

This covers all aspects of safe practice for the community nurse except I believe the amount of years of experience is not sufficient.

Continuing competence and monitoring for community nurse prescribing

It is proposed that nurses who have community nurse prescribing rights be required to participate in peer review of their prescribing practice and complete professional development on prescribing each year (e.g. a community nurse prescriber’s update). Community nurse prescribers must also be able to demonstrate that they have completed 60 days of prescribing practice within the past three years. The Council is proposing that it monitors that these requirements are met every 3 years at practising certificate renewal.

1.9 Do you agree with the ongoing continuing competence requirements for community nurse prescribers?
Yes ☒ No ☐

Yes I agree with the ongoing competency requirements but would like to see an audit of prescribing practice, especially initially as the skills for prescribing are new and being learned by the community nurse. Ongoing education is important as medication interactions and changes are constantly updated.

Indicative list of medicines for community nurse prescribing

The medicines lists for community nurses were developed from the New Zealand Formulary and Pharmaceutical Schedule for medicines to treat identified therapeutic areas. The lists contain commonly used medicines for minor ailments, prevention of disease, common skin conditions and infections and contraceptives. Please refer to the lists on page 21 of the consultation document.

1.10 Do you agree with the proposed list of prescription medicines that nurses with community prescribing rights will be able to prescribe as designated prescribers?
I disagree with the emergency medications such as adrenaline, and atropine on the prescribing list. If this is needed, emergency help is required and would be out of the scope of a community nurse. Some asthmatics are given adrenaline by IV or nebulised but again this is an emergency and an ambulance should be called, for suturing adrenaline is not used on extremities and would require a skilled practitioner to administer. I work in emergency department and do not use a number of these medications especially some of the rare NSAID medications and cannot understand why they would be used in general practice, these to me are not basic or first line medication. The vitamins are also a concern as these should be prescribed under strict medical supervision as they can have a negative impact on the kidneys. I understand the community nurses would have access and ability to check blood results and share medical information which would be a requirement to prescribing.

Non prescription medicines will not be included in the regulation but patients may be able to access a subsidy if the item is “prescribed” by a nurse with community nurse prescribing authority.

1.11 Do you agree that community nurse prescribers should be able to access this list of non prescription medicines?

Yes [X]  No 

Proposal Two: Specialist nurse prescribing

Proposal for specialist nurse prescribing

The Council is proposing that registered nurses with advanced skills and knowledge who work in specialty services (e.g. diabetes services) or expert nurses working in general practice teams in the community be authorised to prescribe medicines for patients who have common conditions e.g. asthma, diabetes, hypertension. They would work as part of a collaborative multidisciplinary team and manage and monitoring patients with these conditions in clinics or by providing home based care. They will seek assistance from a doctor within the team when making difficult or complex clinical decisions.

2.1 Do you agree with the proposal that suitably qualified and experienced registered nurses be able to prescribe from the specialist and community nurse prescribing lists of medicines?

Yes [X]  No 

The ability of specialist nurses to prescribe will mean that they can make a greater contribution to patient care particularly in chronic or long term condition management. Prescribing authority will ensure competence and accountability for the medication decisions specialist nurses make and be convenient for patients who will no longer have to see a doctor for routine monitoring and prescriptions.

2.2 Do you agree that specialist nurse prescribing will enable patients to receive more accessible, timely and convenient care?

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I agree that specialist nurses who can prescribe would enable patients to have better access to health care and will benefit from diagnosis and monitoring from a nurse who specialises in common diseases such as asthma, hypertension, and diabetes. These nurses could work in collaborative multidisciplinary teams or in rural locations. They should have autonomy to work within their scope of practice and not need supervision from medical practitioners.

**Title for specialist nurse prescribing**

The Council has used the title “specialist nurse prescribing” for this proposal but is aware that it may not best describe the nurses who may undertake this type of prescribing (some of whom may be generalist practice or rural nurses) and could be confused with nurses who do not prescribe or have different roles eg clinical nurse specialists.

2.3 Do you consider the title “specialist nurse prescribing” adequately describes and informs the public and other health professionals of the breadth of this prescribing authority?

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I think the name of the speciality should be included in the title. eg general practice nurse prescribing or asthma speciality nurse prescribing.

The Council is proposing that nurses with specialist nurse prescribing authority work in a collaborative relationship within a multidisciplinary team. Specialist nurse prescribers will refer a patient who has a health concern or complexity which is beyond their level of competence to a doctor. The Council believes that ongoing supervision by a medical mentor is unnecessary as specialist nurses must work within a team and within their level of competence.

2.4 Do you agree that nurses with specialist nurse prescribing authority should be required to work in a collaborative multidisciplinary team?

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2.5 Do you think that nurses with specialist nurse prescribing authority should also be required to practice under supervision for six months when they begin to prescribe?

Yes ☒ No ❌

Yes I agree with supervision of practice for 6 months and nurses with a specific area of practice should be able to work independently and refer patients outside their scope of practice to a medical practitioner who can assess and treat them accordingly. I think that practice and supervision is the best method for learning about complex clinical situations that may have an individual risks attached. In this period a nurse is gaining confidence in prescribing and regular audits and case reviews should be conducted.

Scope of practice for specialist nurse prescribing

The Council is consulting on two options for specialist nurse prescribing. The first is to introduce a new scope of practice – specialist nurse prescriber. The second option is for specialist nurse prescribing to be included as an authorisation in a registered nurse’s scope of practice. The first option would more clearly inform the public and other health professionals of the qualification and skills of a nurse with this prescribing authority. The second option may reduce expectations of increased remuneration and would be more acceptable to nursing organisations.

2.6 Do you agree that nurses who apply for specialist nurse prescribing authority should be:

☒ a) registered in a new scope of practice; or

☐ b) have a condition/authorisation included in the registered nurse scope of practice

2.7 If nurses with specialist nurse prescribing authority are registered in a specialist nurse prescriber scope of practice, do you agree with the scope statement on page 34 of the consultation document?

Yes ☒ No ❌

2.8 If nurses with prescribing authority have a condition/authorisation, do you agree with the proposed additional wording in the registered nurse scope of practice?

“Some nurses with additional experience education and training may be authorised by the Council to prescribe some medicines within their competence and area of practice.”

Yes ☐ No ☒

I think this role should be a new role and should have remuneration attached as there is extra responsibility and skills attached to this speciality nurse role. I agree with the additional wording for

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2 Under section 22 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, the Council may change a scope of practice and state the health services a nurse is able to perform.
the specialist nurse prescribing as a new role but I think remuneration is key to developing this role. A cost saving is associated with a specialist nurse follow up / prescription rather than a medical practitioner and prescription, leaving the financial benefit for the general practice alone. A specialist nurse should be recognised for their additional education and skills accompanying this position. Remuneration should also be offered for updating education and conference participation.

**Qualification and training for specialist nurse prescribing**

The Council is proposing that specialist nurse prescribers complete a post graduate diploma in specialist nurse prescribing. The programme would be pathophysiology of common conditions, assessment and clinical decision making (diagnosis), pharmacology and prescribing praxis which would include 150 hours of supervised practice with a designated medical prescriber. The standards for specialist nurse prescriber courses are outlined on page 54 of the consultation document. The Council is proposing that nurses applying for specialist nurse prescribing rights must have satisfactorily completed this qualification including an assessment of their competence to prescribe (see competencies on page 64) by the medical mentor before being authorised to prescribe.

2.9 Do you agree that the proposed education and training for specialist nurse prescribing is consistent with their scope of practice and their prescribing authority and will enable them to demonstrate competent and safe prescribing practice?

Yes ☒ No ☒

2.10 Do you agree with the standards for accreditation of courses for specialist nurse prescribing?

Yes ☒ No ☒

2.11 Do you agree with the proposed competencies for specialist nurse prescribers?

Yes ☒ No ☒

I am currently doing the advanced nurse practicum and have completed my diploma, I believe I would be ready to prescribe medications in my narrow scope of practice by the time I complete my Masters. I agree the proposed education and training is sufficient for prescribing medications. The standards for accreditation are clear and the competencies are accurate and well designed to support a designated speciality nurse prescriber to confidently work with patient safety in mind.
Entry criteria

The Council is proposing that the registered nurse must meet the following criteria before gaining entry to a prescribing programme:

- The registered nurse must hold a current annual practising certificate and must have completed three years equivalent full time practice. At least one year must be in the area of practice she/he will be prescribing.
- The registered nurse must have support from her employer to undertake the Postgraduate diploma in specialist nurse prescribing and must confirm that they will be able to prescribe in their work role at the completion of the course.
- The registered nurse must have the support of an identified prescriber mentor who will support her/him to prescribe.
- The registered nurse must be employed by an organisation that supports nurse prescribing through policy, audit, peer review and accessibility of continuing education.

2.12 Do you agree with the entry criteria for specialist nurse prescribing programme?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Yes I agree with the entry criteria but would like to see at least 2 years in the area of practice. I believe it takes around two years to understand the speciality in which you are able to prescribe. Three years postgraduate experience is maybe too short, a diploma in nursing takes at least 2 years of intensive learning to complete and I believe if a newly graduated nurse completed this in a short time frame he/she may would not have maintained total engagement in clinical practice to obtain enough skills or expertise to practice as an advanced nursing role.

Continuing competence and monitoring

The Council proposes that nurses who have specialist nurse prescribing rights be required to undertake regular case review of their prescribing practice with a suitable mentor and complete professional development hours each year on prescribing within the 60 hours of professional development completed by all nurses every three years. Specialist nurse prescribers must also be able to demonstrate that they have completed 60 days of prescribing practice within the past three years. The Council is proposing that it monitors that these requirements are met every 3 years.

2.13 Do you agree with the continuing competence requirements for specialist nurse prescribers?

Yes ☒ No ☐

I agree that continuing competence should be required as discussed in the consultation document. However I would like to see a formula for nurses who do not continue to meet
the required standard set by nursing council. There is a need for a documented pathway for nurses to regain competencies, by audit and case study review. A high standard for candidates should be maintained throughout this process, while a nurse has prescribing rights.

Proposed list of prescription medicines for specialist nurse prescribing

The list contains commonly used medicines for common condition and is not an inclusive list. Please note the prescription medicines for community nurse prescribing on page 40 of the consultation document will also be included in the list for specialist nurse prescribers.

The Council is considering whether it is necessary to identify some medicines that specialist nurses may not initiate but could safely repeat prescribe. For example antipsychotic medicines.

2.14 Do the indicative community nurse prescribing and specialist nurse prescribing lists of prescription medicines reflect the range of medicines that nurses with specialist nurse prescribing rights will need to access?

Yes ☒ No ☐

I agree with the list of prescribed medications but should be limited to the speciality the nurse has in their defined scope of practice, similar to nurse practitioner. Why would a nurse practitioner have a defined scope of practice and only be able to prescribe around that defined area, compared to the speciality nurse who is able to prescribe across many different specialities and disease processes? The ultimate responsibility for prescribing a medications to a patient group is with the person who writes the prescription, even if they are in collaboration with a general practitioner.

2.15 Do the prescription medicine lists include any medicines that specialist nurse prescribers should not be able to access?

Yes ☒ No ☐

The prescriptions medicines should only be within the nurse scope of practice. Within the specific and defined speciality.

2.16 Do you think there are medicines that specialist nurses should not initiate but could safely repeat prescribe?

Yes ☒ No ☐
My scope of practice is in the cardiac field and I would not feel confident about prescribing new medications to someone with multiple co-morbidities and has many different medications but would be confident to continue a specific prescription plan if all diagnostic parameters were met, ie continuation of frusemide if BP, sodium levels and assessment of fluid volumes were within range. I believe a nurse at this level understands complex clinical situations and would not prescribe medications outside his/her scope of practice but would confidently repeat a prescription. Collaboration and consultation of stopping a medications should be made to the original prescriber.

Non prescription medicines

Non prescription medicines will not be included in the regulation but patients may be able to access a subsidy if the item is “prescribed” by a nurse with specialist nurse prescribing authority.

2.17 Do you agree that specialist nurse prescribers should be able to access the list of non prescription medicines on page 43 of the consultation document?

Yes ☒ No ☐

I agree specialist nurse prescribers should be able to access the non-prescription medicines on page 43 for the same reasons as the community nurse.

List of Controlled drugs for specialist nurse prescribing

Designated nurse prescribers are already able to prescribe from a list of 42 controlled drugs outlined in the Misuse of Drugs Regulation 1977 (see Appendix 7 on page 71 of the consultation document). The Council believes that some of the controlled drugs on the present list are no longer used or fall outside the therapeutic areas it has identified for specialist nurse prescribers. It is proposing a list of 15 controlled drugs for specialist nurse prescribing (see page 44).

Designated nurse prescribers are restricted to prescribing controlled drugs only for patients under their care, only in an emergency and only a 3 day supply (Misuse of Drugs Regulation 1977 Section 21 (4B)).
2.18 Do you agree with the proposed list of controlled drugs that nurses with specialist nurse prescribing rights will be able to prescribe as designated prescribers?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Speciality nurses should not be able to prescribe controlled drugs as this should be a medical practitioner or nurse practitioners responsibility. If a patient requires a controlled drug for pain relief their condition needs to be reviewed by an advanced practitioner.

2.19 Do you think that specialist nurse prescribers should be able to prescribe controlled drugs (from the appropriate list) for a period longer than three days?

Yes ☐ No ☒

They should not be able to prescribe controlled drugs as above.

Other comments

3.1 Do you have any other comments on the consultation paper or the proposed models of nurse prescribing?

This is a very exciting time for nurses and the role of nursing is continuing to expand in a positive way. I am very close to completing my masters in nursing with a goal of becoming a nurse practitioner or speciality nurse prescriber. I have reflected on my current practice and my submission is based on my clinical experience and expertise. I am very interested in the outcome of this submission.

Thank you for completing this response form. Please save and send your submission to:

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