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: New Zealand Institute of Rural Health
Position:

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 provider ☐ 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object to this publication or to the publication of your name (Please note that the names of individual submitters will not be published) tick one or both of the following boxes: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 ☐

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?

Yes ✓ No ☐

While we agree that nurse prescribing will ensure patients receive more accessible, timely and convenient care it is important the nurses are adequately prepared via a suitable educational programme to ensure the quality of the care/accuracy of diagnosis and full understanding of implications/risks.

There is some concern around possible increase in the cost of care as nurses tend to

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.
investigate more than doctors, and have longer consultations but as this increases patient satisfaction this will be mitigated.

Our medical representative feels there are risks of loss of continuity, and opportunities to raise at the time of presentation for unrelated problem, but this is an issue which already occurs. These concerns can be addressed when working in close collegial relationship.

**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?

Yes  No ✔

We believe that “Primary health” might better describe the nurses who will undertake this prescribing.

**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?

Yes ✔ No □

**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 ☐

There has been concern expressed around the acceptance of prior learning for some nurses who have already completed prescribing papers within their postgraduate education especially if this is dependent on Tertiary institutions, as in the past they have made nurses retake papers which have been completed because of the length of time which has elapsed even if the nurse in question has been utilising the knowledge in the meantime.

The are some very experienced nurses working in collegial relationships with doctors now who are effectively prescribing (the doctor signs the prescription for legal purposes while practically the nurse is prescribing) and these relationship should be somehow “grandfathered” in to formalise this practice and ensure that it is subject to initial formal assessment and ongoing review.

Where nurses have trained overseas it is churlish to not recognise their prior learning. Rural/remote nurses cannot easily attend institutionally based learning sessions and realistically internet services are in some places still so slow as to limit e-learning.

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 ☐

We believe there may be some problems with nurses having difficulty getting a supporting employer and an authorised prescriber – could this not be “should ideally” rather than “must” – exemptions might need to be vetted by those running the course and if Nursing Council subsequently consider the support inadequate they might decline registration. Circumstances which come to mind are a community health trust which might not be in a position to pay the nurses’ fees to attend the course but might grant her leave without pay to attend. The process should be a bit elastic to facilitate the development of prescribing expertise. The support of a pharmacist might be useful with lesser authorised prescriber input.

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 ☐
Suggest the updates should be online for our rural colleagues otherwise accessing them might prove to be difficult although in some rural areas broadband access is still not good. How are the 60 days of prescribing practice to be monitored? Will this be linked to the peer review and/or the prescriptions written within the time frame. For some rural nurses who work in isolation peer review can prove difficult. Will review by their medical colleague be included here if necessary? Peer review with medical colleagues would ensure patient centred continuity of care.

**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?**

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I think that the list for the RN’s (school nurses, Public health nurse, Practice nurse etc.) needs to be revised as there are medications which they are unlikely to need to prescribe and the list is too extensive.

The practicalities of enforcing adherence to list creates some difficulties. We have now NPs in the scope of diabetes able to prescribe augmentin for an infected diabetic ulcer but not for a non diabetic infected ulcer or a sinusitis. In fact one hospital officer is reputed to have advised pharmacists to accept virtually whatever a NP prescriber prescribes because of the practical difficulties of differentiation.

In the report the use of a list is described as cumbersome and not really workable ?page 8 but then it is suggested here – does not make a lot of sense. The authorised prescriber who is delegating to them should be working collegially with the designated prescriber and thereby monitor things. It is not just the prescribing but monitoring the condition for which the medication is being prescribed – there is no reason why medication for cardiac failure should not be repeated by a designated prescriber if they have checked on the progression or otherwise of the condition (cardiac failure, or asthma)
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 ☑️ 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 ☑️ 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?

Yes ☑️ No ☐

The issues with specialist nurse prescribing and community nurse prescribing are similar. The community nurse can prescribe systemic antibiotics without medical review – antibiotics are listed amongst the medications they can prescribe. We believe repeating anti- hypertensive or anti-
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?

- Yes [✓]
- No [ ]

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?

- Yes [✓]
- No [ ]

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 [ ]

A collaborative multidisciplinary team should provide a level of support making ‘supervision’ part of the team work, we would assume there would be a generalist medical practitioner would be part of the multidisciplinary team.

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 

Much of this is semantics and the paper suggests a new title might be seen as a reason to expect/request a higher rate of pay. Practitioners with experience who practice effectively and well in a wider scope should be financially rewarded accordingly.

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 standards for specialist nurse prescriber courses are outlined on page 54 of the consultation document. The

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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.
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 ☐

There needs to be a formal recognition of nurses prior qualifications where papers on clinical assessment and diagnostic reasoning, pharmacology etc. have already been undertaken as part of their postgraduate study regardless of the length of time since they undertook the paper providing they have been utilising the knowledge gained. Again there is concern that nurses who have already prepared themselves and are working at a specialist level of practice will have to retake papers with all the added cost and stress involved.

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 [ ]

These are the same as a community nurse – and the same comments apply

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 [ ]

Again the same as the community nurse

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 [ ]
Lists can be problematic and it might be more appropriate to identify any medications a nurse should not be prescribing – particularly where she/he might be repeating prescription in a stable patient? There is also the patient being followed by the specialist who leave the community provider to prescribe.

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

Yes [ ] No [✓]

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

Yes [✓] No [ ]

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 [ ]

The key things here are ensuring that prescribers are not being bullied by colleagues or patients to prescribe and that they are able to consult with appropriately experienced/skilled colleagues where there are issues. It can be worth emphasising that there is some protection in consulting with colleagues and checking the appropriateness in another’s view.
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 [ ]

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 [ ]

Particularly for specialist nurses working in rural areas and in palliative care

Other comments

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

Where nurses are undergoing peer review it is appropriate that the doctor who the patient is registered with be considered as a peer and be part of the review. This will ensure more integration of service, consolidate relationships between the disciplines and improve the patient journey.

It is important to recognise prior learning and to avoid nurses who have already completed health assessment and pharmacology papers do not have to repeat the papers regardless of the time since they took the papers providing they have been using the knowledge in their current practice. Otherwise there is the risk that the already trained and experienced nurse, particularly in remote locations, might well not retrain and so her/his patients would be deprived of a service.

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