

29 September 2004

## **To All Stakeholders**

# **Draft Charter of Nursing Practice**

The South African Nursing Council presents to you the Draft Charter for Nursing Practice for your input and comments. The Charter of Nursing Practice is a comprehensive document that includes the:

- code of conduct,
- ethical code and values
- standards for practice,
- competency framework and
- scope of practice

that will provide the framework for nursing practice.

It is important that members of the nursing profession, health service delivery system, communities and other interested persons review the contents of this very important document as this draft charter will form the basis for the formulation of new regulations that will apply to the nursing profession.

### **1 Background**

The Review of the Scope of Practice of Nursing and the profession of nursing began in 1999 when the South African Nursing Council prioritised the need to revise the scope of practice. The factors that influenced the review of the scope of practice was a changing health care system identified in the White Paper for the Transformation of Health and the

changes in education system brought about by the National Qualifications Framework and the South African Qualifications Act.

The purpose of the review is to align the practice of nursing to the changes in the national health policy and the legislative framework. Since 1994 a number of developments that impacted on health care delivery have created the imperative for professional regulatory bodies of health to review the practice of those professionals that they regulate. Accordingly the purpose of reviewing the scope of practice for the profession of nursing was to:

- Ensure that nursing practice is in keeping with and is responsive to a changing health care delivery system.
- Develop a scope for nursing practice that is informed by the core competencies required for nursing practice.
- Review the scope applicable to different categories of nurse to ensure that each category of nurse is enabled to practice independently within their scope.
- The new scope of practice and the competencies required for nursing practice will then inform the education and training of nurses required for such practice. This will assist in facilitating the development of a framework for a single unitary education pathway for nursing qualifications that is in line with the principles of the National Qualifications Framework.

## **2 Constraints of the Current Scope of Practice of Nurses**

The existing scope of practice has placed constraints on the practice of nurses in the current health care delivery system. Some of these constraints are:

- Distinction of practice in terms of the different categories of nurses is unclear
- Comprises of lists of tasks that can be performed and it is not competency based
- Scope of practice is not aligned to current health policies and the needs of the health care system
- Professional nurses must be available to provide direct and indirect supervision to enrolled nurses and nursing auxiliaries i.e. the enrolled nurses and nursing auxiliaries cannot function independently and therefore can only work in situations where a registered nurse is available to provide supervision
- The scope of practice for an enrolled nurse is restrictive and limiting and in reality enrolled nurses are expected to assume responsibilities that are far beyond their scope of practice in most health care settings.

### **3 Challenges**

#### **3.1 Challenges Facing the Regulation of Nursing**

- Evaluate the appropriateness of the existing scopes of practice to the context of health care delivery in South Africa.
- Identify the categories of nurses required to deliver a cost effective and a high standard of health care.
- Align the scopes of practice of different categories of nurses in accordance with the health care delivery needs.
- Evaluate the education and training of nurses in terms of appropriateness, cost benefit, core competencies and standards for practice.

### **3.2 Challenges facing Nursing Education**

The changes in both the health care system and the education system has created numerous challenges for nursing education and training and some of these challenges are:

- Promoting and maintaining a caring ethos within the nursing profession.
- Ensuring National Health Priorities are addressed in all nursing education programmes.
- Creation of a cadre of nurses who are lifelong learners and critical thinkers.
- Promote the ability in every nurse to evaluate and assure quality in this/her practice.
- Access to Nursing Education by learners is limited due to the slow implementation of the National Qualifications Framework in Health Sector
  - Selection and recruitment criteria in many instances remain restrictive limiting access to nursing qualifications.
  - The distinct nursing qualifications for each category of nurse is not in keeping with the NQF principles and thereby limiting access to higher education training opportunities for existing enrolled & auxiliary nurses.
  - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a selection criterion is not widely applied because RPL assessment is complex, costly and there is a general lack of knowledge on how to give recognition to prior learning.

#### **4 Process Followed in the Review of the Scope of Practice**

- 4.1 A workshop with the profession and relevant stakeholders was held in January 1999. The Education Committee developed a draft document outlining the broad principles for the Framework of a Scope of Practice for nursing.
- 4.2 The document was circulated to stakeholders for comment. Stakeholders consulted included, nursing educational institutions, service providers and bodies representing the interests of nurses
- 4.3 The Laws & Practice Standards Committee of the South African Nursing Council developed a detailed scope of practice for the profession of nursing and for each category of nurse.
- 4.4 Council established a working group comprising of members from the Education Committee & the Laws & Practice Standards Committee to work on the review process jointly.
- 4.5 The working group developed the Draft "A Charter for Nursing Practice" and this document contains the following:
  - Background to Nursing Practice outlining the Legal & Policy Framework that impacts on nursing practice:
  - Code of Conduct & Ethics of Nursing Practice
  - Scope of Practice for the Profession of Nursing & for the different categories of nurses.
  - Practice Standards
  - Competency Framework for Nursing Practice and Competencies for each area of nursing practice.
- 4.6 The work of the task team was informed by a review of:
  - Health care delivery needs within the context of the South African Health care system
  - Existing legislation
  - Policy documents
  - Human resource reports (Pick Report)

- Norms of Standards (PHC, District Hospitals)
  - Regulatory frameworks & Scope of nursing practice documents of in other countries:
    - UK, Canada, New Mexico, Australian, New Zealand
    - African Countries (ECSACON Regulatory Framework)
    - ICN competency framework for nursing
- 4.7 The Standards for Nursing Education & Training will be finalised once there is agreement on the scope of practice, the practice standards and the competency framework.
- 4.8 A full reference list will be included in the final document.
- 4.9 The Draft Charter for Nursing Practice was presented to the Department of Health on 23 April 2004 for their input and comment and the feedback received was that the Department of Health supported this document in principle.
- 4.10 Following this positive response from the Department the Council has embarked on a broader consultation process.

## **5 What is new about the Draft Scope of Practice?**

### **5.1 The assumptions underlying this draft scope of practice**

5.1.1 The term "Nursing" will incorporate both midwifery and nursing except where a clear distinction is made in terms of midwifery practice. This was informed by the fact that in South Africa the practice of midwifery is not clearly distinguishable as it is in the main nurses that practice midwifery. General nursing education and training forms the basis of midwifery education and training and therefore it is difficult to distinguish at which point the practitioner is applying nursing or midwifery skills. It is for this reason that the

assumption is made that the term nursing can reflect both nursing and midwifery in South Africa.

- 5.1.2 South Africa requires nurses that are comprehensively trained to provide nursing care in various contexts (Primary health care, institutional/hospitals, midwifery and mental health settings) and in both rural and urban setting.
- 5.1.3 A comprehensive training does not imply or focus on attaining separate qualifications but rather on the ability to integrate knowledge and skills for the provision of comprehensive nursing care.
- 5.1.4 That the existing categories of nurses are necessary for current health care delivery system.
- 5.1.5 Each category of nurse will be an independent practitioner in accordance with their scope of practice and the level of training and competence attained.
- 5.1.6 This draft scope of practice focuses on outlining the practice of the three basic categories of nurses.
- 5.1.7 Education and training of nurses is informed by the scope of practice and the competencies required for nursing practice.
- 5.1.8 Where the scope of practice for current categories of nurses is expanded training to upgrade the skills and competencies will be undertaken.
- 5.2 Clearly defines the Scopes of the Profession of Nursing and Midwifery.
- 5.3 Each category of nurse is defined and a clear distinction in terms of the practice is made.
- 5.4 The scope distinguishes between different areas of practice viz. clinical, ethical and professional and quality of practice.
- 5.5 The scope of practice is informed by competency framework for the profession of nursing. The competency framework supports an outcomes based approach to nursing education and training.

The South African Nursing Council looks forward to receiving input and comments from you during the workshops we are conducting in all of the 9 Provinces. The Council also recognizes that not all persons will be able to attend the workshops and those that do attend will require time to consult their colleagues before commenting on the document. We are therefore providing you with an opportunity to distribute this document widely for further discussion and input.

The Council will appreciate if all written input is sent to the Council by **30 November 2004** so that the document can be finalised.

**Comments can be forwarded to:**

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We thank you in advance for your contribution to this important document.

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