



NEW SOUTH WALES NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIAN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY FEDERATION NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH



POLICY ON THE QUALITY USE OF MEDICINES

Re-Endorsed by Annual Conference 2019

NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association
50 O'Dea Avenue Waterloo NSW 2017

P 02 8595 1234 (metro) • 1300 367 962 (regional)

www.nswnma.asn.au

Policy on the Quality Use of Medicines

THE NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION RECOGNISES THAT:

- Modern medicines, while making a significant contribution to the treatment of ill health and the prevention of disease, to increasing life expectancy and improving health outcomes, can also cause harm.
- Quality use of medicines involves the judicious selection of treatment options (including choice between medicine, non-medicine and no treatment) appropriate choice of medicine when medicine is required. Safe and effective use of medicines is ensured. This is in line with the *Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in HealthCare, New South Wales Therapeutic Advisory Group Inc and Clinical Excellence Commission*.^{1,2}
- Quality use of medicines requires that the appropriate drug be prescribed, that it be available at a price people can afford, and that it be dispensed and administered correctly.
- Nurses and midwives have a key role in ensuring the quality use of medicines, whether they are prescription or over the counter.
- Nurses and midwives recognise that they have a particular responsibility and accountability in relation to medications under the NSW legislation, the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966* and the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008*.
- It is recognised that use of medications is only one therapeutic strategy for promoting and maintaining health, managing ill health and alleviating discomfort.

THE NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION ADOPTS THE POLICY THAT:

1. Registered nurses, midwives and enrolled nurses working within identified local policy, in consultation with medical practitioners and pharmacists, are the most appropriate persons to administer medications to persons who are unable to perform this function unaided.
2. Appropriate legal, statutory and educational frameworks support the roles of nurses and midwives in relation to the administration, initiation and adjustment of medications.
3. All facilities must have clear policies and procedures in relation to staff responsibilities for the prescription, supply, administration, storage and disposal of medications. Nurses and midwives must be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of such policies and procedures.



4. All facilities must have the resources available and accessible to nursing and midwifery staff to enable them to implement and adhere to legislation, policies and procedures; and to identify and resolve problems in relation to the administration, initiation and adjustment of medications.
5. Registered nurses, midwives and enrolled nurses must have ready access to current information and education relating to all therapeutic substances used in the facility in which they are employed.
6. Consultation mechanisms between medical practitioner, pharmacist, consumer and nurse organisations should be established to promote the quality use of medicines.

REFERENCES

1. National Quality use of Medicines in Australian Hospitals NSW
2. *Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and NSW Therapeutic Advisory Group Inc. (2014), National Quality Use of Medicines Indicators.*
https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/sites/default/files/migrated/SAQ127_National_QUM_Indicators_V14-FINAL-D14-39602.pdf