



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



POLICY ON NURSING CARE OF THE PERSON WHO IS DYING

Re-Endorsed by Annual Conference 2020

NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association
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Policy on Nursing Care of the Person who is Dying

THE NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION RECOGNISES THAT:

- The role of the nurse and midwife within the context of this policy must remain within the boundaries of accepted nursing and midwifery practice, which includes the profession's code of ethics and code of conduct, and within existing legislation and organisational guidelines.
- Nurses and midwives should have an understanding of their ethical and legal responsibilities in regard to providing care for the person who is dying.
- People have a right to know if they have a condition for which death is the expected outcome. Any such disclosure must be sensitive to the event and social sensitivities of people and their families.
- People have a right to a choice, both in the care and treatment which is provided to them and in the way in which that care and treatment is provided.
- It is the right of the person who is dying to make choices about their care and treatment based on adequate explanations and information.
- The person who is dying has the right to a death which is as dignified as possible, as the person themselves would define dignity.
- The person who is dying has the right to refuse treatment.
- The nursing and midwifery role includes being an advocate for the person who is dying, and for their significant others.

THE NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION ADOPTS THE POLICY THAT:

1. The nurses and midwives professional role is to provide care and treatment, so that the person who is dying has maximal control over their care and treatment.
2. The care and treatment of the person who is dying must be consistent with their beliefs and cultural expectations.



3. The nurse or midwife should be aware of other conditions, which may affect decision making in a person who is dying, such as depression, other mental illness, dementia, or the effects of mood altering drugs.
4. Children and adolescents, who are dying, should be informed and consulted and their wishes considered in any decisions made regarding their care and treatment.
5. The nurse or midwife responsible for the care of the person who is dying, and other nurses and midwives involved in their care, must be informed about the person's wishes and expectations in relation to their care and treatment.
6. The nurse or midwife responsible for the care of the person who is dying, and other nurses or midwives involved in their care, have a right to know the outcome of discussions between the person and their treating medical practitioner, which are specific to their care and treatment. The outcome of these discussions should be appropriately documented and updated at regular intervals, and be available to other health professionals involved in the person's care.
7. Discussions with the person who is dying and their family and significant others in relation to the initiation of any life prolonging treatment should be part of the management plan and the outcome of those discussions clearly documented.
8. The provision of palliative care for any person who is dying is essential. This includes controlling pain, relieving other symptoms of disease and providing emotional and psychosocial support in preparation for death.
9. Early referral to palliative care services should be available to all persons who are dying.
10. Employers should provide the necessary resources to support nurses and midwives in dealing with the professional and emotional issues arising from caring for the person who is dying.

NOTES

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association endorses *Guidelines for end-of-life care and decision-making* (2005) NSW Ministry of Health, available online at:

https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/ActivePDSDocuments/GL2005_057.pdf