

How can a nurse contribute to my practice?

Patient Carer

Clinical activities including:

- Wound management
- Triage patients for urgent appointments
- Injections, application and removal of casts
- Suturing
- Preventive health checks including cervical screening and immunisation
- First aid and emergency management
- Diagnostic services including ECGs, stress tests, urine drug screening, hearing tests, peak flow, spirometry, mood and memory assessment
- Providing outreach services such as home assessments for the elderly, immunisations at workplaces and childcare centres.

Organiser

Coordinate organisational aspects of patient care such as:

- Maintaining, monitoring and improving patient information systems including patient register and recall systems
- Brokering referrals to community services
- Coordinating and undertaking patient health assessments
- Triage patients
- Maintaining treatment room equipment and resources
- Sterilising instruments, managing contaminated waste
- Identifying and understanding the role of community agencies and service providers and networking with these services
- Planning and coordinating care including routine monitoring and follow up of patients with care plans.

Quality Controller

Managing quality and risk activities such as:

- Infection control
- Maintaining cold chain for vaccines
- The safe disposal of sharps
- Contributing to practice accreditation
- Arranging patient follow up of pathology results with evidence of audit trails

- Writing and/or updating practice and clinical policies and procedures
- Participating in/leading a team approach to managing adverse events.

Problem Solver

Solving problems that arise on a day-to-day basis such as:

- Managing high patient demand on busy days
- Supporting receptionists' decision making
- Solving issues with practice software systems
- Sourcing information such as referral options.

Educator

Providing education in various ways, including:

- Other members of the general practice team including GPs
- Students who enter the practice for clinical placement
- Patients in areas of prevention and health promotion, management of specific health conditions
- Participation in local and/or national disease prevention campaigns (e.g. influenza).

Agent of Connectivity

Connecting different disciplines within the practice, between patients and clinicians, between administrative staff and GPs and between the community setting and hospitals:

- Liaising with local hospital networks and other health services
- Building and maintaining relationships across the practice team
- Arranging appointments, managing internal and external referral processes and procedures, arranging case conferences and providing information and feedback between the services, patients and GP
- Planning and coordinating care including routine monitoring and follow-up of patients with care plans
- Patient advocacy.

Phillips CB, Pearce CM, Dwan KM, Hall S, Porritt J, Yates R, Kijakovic M, Sibbald B. Charting new roles for Australian general practice nurses: Abridged report of the Australian General Practice Nurses Study. Canberra: Australian Primary Health Care Institute, 2008. Available from aphcri.anu.edu.au and www.apna.asn.au.

Practice Nurse Incentive Program Guidelines 2012, Australian Government Department of Human Services: www.humanservices.gov.au/health-professionals/services/practice-nurse-incentive-programme.