

Practice nurses (PN) play an integral role in the primary care team, carrying out a diverse range of activities within their scope of practice.

This HeadStart includes important skills and capabilities to ensure new PNs have confidence in their scope of practice, clinical and technical skills, and ability to interact with patients and the health system.

1. Access

You will need access to the following professional and patient information to carry out your role.

- [AHPRA and NMBA](#) Advice on registration standards, CPD guidelines and professional indemnity insurance.
- An individual [PRODA](#) account linked to your AHPRA registration. Your Manager will link you to the organisation's PRODA account.
- [Health Professionals Online Services \(HPOS\)](#). This is used to access Government services e.g. Australian Immunisation Register (AIR), National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- Your practice's electronic medical record platform.
- On these platforms your access level will be set by your Manager. You may be delegated to act for other practice staff as appropriate to your role.
- [Pen CS CAT4 software](#) to understand your practice population data. Talk to your Manager about access.

2. Knowledge

Understand primary care, your practice population's needs and referral pathways. Your role orientation program should include information on the local population to ensure cultural needs are considered and respected so you can work to provide culturally safe services. Your role will include providing information and supporting patients to navigate the health system to access appropriate care.

- [Capital Health Network \(CHN\) - Population Health priority information sheets](#)
- [ACT and NSW HealthPathways](#) provides guidance on management and referral in the local health system. Username: together Password: forhealth
- [Canberra Health Service's Central Health Intake](#) is the portal for all community health referrals e.g. allied health, mental health etc.
- Canberra Health Service's mental health supports - [adults](#) and [child and youth](#)
- [Integrated Team Care \(ITC\) Program](#) for First Nations people with chronic disease who require coordinated, multidisciplinary care.

[My Aged Care \(MAC\)](#) for patients 65 years and older.

[My Health Record](#) secure online central repository for patient health information.

Understand general practice accreditation and your quality improvement responsibilities.

[RACGP General Practice accreditation standards](#)

[Is your practice enrolled in PIPQI?](#)

Your role specific responsibilities.

Discuss your position description with your Manager. PNs may have delegated areas of responsibility for key areas including:

Infection Prevention and Control, including ensuring staff adherence to current standards and the practice's policies on hand washing, accessing, storage and use of PPE.

[RACGP infection control standard 5th edition](#)

Cold chain management related to the safe transport and storage of vaccines.

[Department of Health and Aged Care - National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 5'](#)

[The ACT Immunisation Providers Kit 2020](#)

[ACT Health - Cold Chain management for vaccines](#)

[ACT Health - Using ACTH LogTag Data Loggers video](#)

Medicare, MBS and DVA. PNs require this knowledge to ensure accurate patient billing occurs.

[Medicare Benefits Schedule - MBS Online](#)

[Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association \(APNA\) Healthy Practices Resources](#)

[Department of Veteran's Affairs - Information for General Practitioners, Practice Nurses and other primary healthcare providers](#)

3. Skills

Key clinical practice areas require specific skills, knowledge and mentoring to ensure safe quality nursing practice. Discuss training and support regularly with your manager to ensure you provide contemporary, safe high quality care within your scope of practice.

Immunisation and vaccination management includes a working knowledge of the National Immunisation Program (NIP) and awareness of ACT Health's specific requirements.

- [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)
- [National Immunisation Program \(NIP\) Schedule](#)
- [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines "Strive for 5"](#)
- [ACT Health Cold Chain management for vaccines](#)

[Immunisation training courses for nurses and midwives approved by ACT Health.](#)

Mandatory training for those involved in providing COVID-19 vaccines: [COVID-19 vaccination training program](#)

Basic Life Support

- Certification to Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) (HLTAID009) should be updated annually. CHN provides training to ACT primary healthcare staff.
- Certification to Provide First Aid (HLTAID011) and to Provide Basic Emergency Life Support (HLTAID010) should be renewed every 3 years.
- Anaphylaxis training [ASCIA anaphylaxis e-training](#)

Planned and Preventative care

It is important to gain skills in assessment, care planning and care navigation for planned care across the lifespan as outlined in the RACGP's [Green Book - Putting prevention into practice](#) and [Red Book - Guidelines for Preventative Health Activities](#).

- Population and age-based health assessments e.g. Children's, 715, 49+ 75+ year old health checks
- Condition based assessments and plans
 - [Asthma action plans](#)
 - [Heart health checks](#)
- [Services Australia - Health assessments and record keeping responsibilities](#)

- Chronic disease management e.g. [GP Management Plans \(GPMP\)](#), [Team Care Arrangements \(TCA\)](#)
- [National Cancer Screening Programs](#)

Patient journey management. Your organisation's policies and procedures will guide your action steps in using these skills.

- Risk identification and [triage of patients](#).
- Reading and interpreting pathology and test results.
- Reminders and recall systems related to patient results and planned care.

Procedures. Your organisation's policies and procedures will guide your action steps in using these skills. Online courses are available for most of these skills.

- Cannulation and infusion procedures
- ECG procedures
- Spirometry testing
- Surgical assisting in minor procedures.
- Wound management
- Ear syringing

Quality Improvement (QI)

QI skills are required to access and understand practice data to work with practice staff on QI activities in collaboration with CHN's Quality Improvement Team.

QI activities are integral to [Clinical risk management in general practice](#), including adverse events, errors, follow-up of complaints and consumer feedback.

The QI Team can visit your practice for:

- QuK Skills CAT4 training: In-practice support to teach you how to better access and utilise your practice data.
- QuK Visit: To discuss and understand your practice needs and how CHN can support you with your quality improvement activities.
- Contact primarycare@chnact.org.au to arrange a visit.

4. Development Opportunities

- Talk to your Manager about ongoing supervision arrangements and your learning needs.
- Find a mentor – this may be in your workplace or link with someone outside your organisation.
- [APNA's Transition to Practice Program](#) provides education and mentoring to nurses who have transitioned to primary health care. CHN may support nurses to complete this course.
- [Nurse immuniser training](#) enables PNs to administer certain vaccinations without a medical order.
- Motivational interviewing skills can support your practice particularly in care involving behaviour change e.g. smoking cessation and chronic disease management.

5. Resources

Capital Health Network resources

- [CHN Events](#) include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training, Immunisation updates and Practice Connect networking events.
- [Practice support](#) - includes support with quality improvement, digital health, Indigenous health, resources, practice visits, telephone and online support.
- [Quik Library](#) - resources covering topics relevant to primary health care developed to inform and support primary care in Continuous Quality Improvement
- Free counselling through CHN's Employee Assistance Scheme, [AccessEAP](#)

Other Resources

- [APNA resources for members](#) - includes New to Primary Health Care video and online module, education and CPD resources and a Nurse Support Line.
- Self-care
 - Black Dog Institute - [TEN - The Essential Network](#)
 - [Nurse and Midwife Support](#)

Edition 1 December 2022