

Be amazing in your



as a Nurse Practitioner.

What is a Nurse Practitioner?

A Nurse Practitioner (NP) is a Registered Nurse (RN) experienced in their clinical specialty, educated at Masters Level, and who is endorsed by the Nurses and Midwives Board of Australia (NMBA) to provide patient care in an advanced and extended clinical role. Nurse practitioners have provided health care around the world since the 1960s.

NPs provide safe, high quality care in the assessment and management of patients. The clinical and academic education undertaken by NPs prepares them to expand the boundaries of nursing practice and to incorporate extensions to their clinical practice such as assessing patients and diagnosing health problems, in order to provide complete episodes of care.

The development of the NP role is responsive to increasing demands on healthcare and the need to improve access to care, particularly in rural and remote areas. The NP role encapsulates advanced nursing knowledge and expanded skills to meet the service demands while aiming to address gaps in existing health care services often providing services where none currently exist. The role also enables clinicians to further their career while maintaining valuable expertise within the clinical setting.

While autonomy enables NPs to deliver flexible and responsive care, working together with other health care professionals is an important part of NP practice.

The title 'Nurse Practitioner' or 'NP' is protected by law and may only be used by a RN who has met the criteria set by the NMBA and been endorsed to do so.

What does a Nurse Practitioner do?

There are several ways in which the practice of NPs differs from traditional models of care. Examples are:

- Perform advanced health assessments;
- Initiate and interpreting diagnostic investigations such as pathology and diagnostic imaging;
- Diagnosing health problems;
- Design, implement and monitor therapeutic regimens in collaboration with patients, families/careers and other health professionals;
- Prescribe medications;
- Initiate and receive appropriate referrals to and from other health professionals

Where do Nurse Practitioners practice?

NPs work with families, individuals and communities within a variety of health care settings including hospitals, community health settings and in private practice. There is no limit to where NP services may be established in NSW. For example there are currently NPs working in the following specialty areas:

- Emergency
- Aged Care
- Private Practice
- Drug and Alcohol
- Medical
- Surgical
- Rural and Remote
- Women's Health
- Community
- Mental Health
- Chronic & Complex Care
- Paediatrics

How do I become a Nurse Practitioner?

Experienced RNs who have become experts in their field of practice and wish to become an NP need to meet the endorsement requirements of the NMBA. These requirements include a relevant Master's degree and at least 3 years full time advanced practice experience (within the last 6 years) which demonstrates that they meet the NMBA National Practice Standards for the NP. Endorsement is separate to gaining employment as a NP. Once endorsed NPs are able to apply for NP positions within their specialty throughout Australia. More information on the endorsement process can be obtained from the NMBA website.

Study support:

Scholarships are available to RNs who are working in full or part time permanent positions in the NSW Public Health System. Application can be made for a scholarship if you are undertaking an NP study programs. See the Nursing and Midwifery Office website for application information and closing dates.

Useful contacts:

Nursing and Midwifery Office

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing/practitioner/nurse_practitioner.asp

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au

Australian College of Nurse Practitioners

www.acnp.org.au

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council

www.anmac.org.au

Further information:

Principal Advisor Nursing Practice
Nursing and Midwifery Office NSW Health
Tel. (02) 93919490

 **Become a Nurse Practitioner** and see the difference you make, everyday.