

The Role of Aboriginal Health Workers and General Practice Nurses in Aboriginal Medical Services in NSW

| Role | Aboriginal Health Workers (AHWs) in NSW ⁱ | General Practice Nurses ⁱⁱ |
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| Immunisation | <p>In NSW, AHWs cannot administer vaccinations.</p> <p>AHWs role in immunisation provision can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advocate for community members to get immunised - develop and distribute promotional resources and information - support to community (eg access to services) • Assist Nurse Immunisers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient education and information • Cold Chain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fridge monitoring - re-stocking fridge - packing esky for outreach clinics • Development and management of computer systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - entering immunisation encounters onto the ACIR secure site and/or practice software - generating due/overdue reports - recall and reminders | <p>Registered Nurses (RNs) can vaccinate with a written doctor's order. RNs who have completed the College of Nursing <i>Immunisation for Registered Nurses</i> course, and have maintained their competence by attending annual immunisation updates can vaccinate without a doctor's order.</p> <p>Enrolled Nursesⁱⁱⁱ (ENs) cannot administer vaccinations, unless they have completed an Endorsed Medication Administration course. If an EN has completed the Endorsed Medication Administration course, they can only immunise with a written doctor's order, and under the supervision of an RN.</p> <p>Item 10993 is available for General Practice Nurses to claim for immunisations on behalf of a GP^{iv}.</p> |
| Cervical Screening | AHWs are not credentialed to perform cervical screening. | RNs that are appropriately qualified and trained can take cervical smears. The only courses in NSW that will credential an RN to undertake a cervical smear |

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| | <p>AHWs role in cervical screening can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - encourage and educate women to be screened - resource development - support to women | <p>are the <i>Well Women's Screening</i> course or the <i>Family Planning NSW Certificate in Sexual and Reproductive Health (Nursing)</i> course, both run through Family Planning NSW.</p> <p>ENs are <u>not</u> qualified to take cervical smears.</p> <p>10998 and 10999 are available for General Practice Nurses to claim for cervical screening on behalf of a GP.</p> <p>Items 10994 and 10995 are available for General Practice Nurses to claim for cervical screening and preventative health checks on behalf of a GP.</p> |
| Wound Management | In NSW, AHWs are not credentialed to provide wound management. | <p>Appropriately qualified and trained General Practice Nurses (both ENs and RNs) can provide wound management.</p> <p>Item 10996 is available for General Practice Nurses to claim for wound management on behalf of a GP.</p> |
| Chronic Disease Management | AHWs and/or General Practice Nurses can assist a GP in preparing or reviewing a GP Management Plan (GPMP)(Item 721) or Team Care Arrangement (TCA) (Item 723), for example, in assessing the patient, identifying the patient's needs and making arrangements for services ^y . | |
| | In NSW, AHWs are not eligible to claim Item 10997 for the provision of monitoring and support to people with chronic disease. | <p>Item 10997 is available for General Practice Nurses to claim to assist patients that require access to ongoing care, routine treatment and ongoing monitoring and support between the more structured reviews of the care plan by the patient's usual GP, to a maximum of five services per patient per calendar year. The patient must have a GPMP, TCA or Multidisciplinary Care Plan in place.</p> <p>10997 can be used to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checks on clinical progress; |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring medication compliance; • Self-management advice, and; • Collection of information to support GP reviews of Care Plans. |
| Team Care Arrangements | AHWs can be part of a Team Care Arrangement, providing they have Certificate III or higher qualifications in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, and they are registered with Medicare. This entitles eligible patients to five allied health sessions per calendar year. Item 10950 is available for AHWs to claim when a GP has referred an eligible patient as part of a TCA ^{vi} . | General Practice Nurses cannot be part of a Team Care Arrangement. |
| Health Checks | <p>The information collection component of the Child Health Check (Item 708), Adult Health Check (Item 710) and Older Persons Health Check (Items 704 & 706) may be completed by an AHW or General Practice Nurse where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The patient's medical practitioner has initiated the collection of information by a third party, after the patient has agreed to the Health Check and has agreed to a third party collecting information for the assessment; • The patient is told whether or not information collected about them for the health check will be retained by the third party; and • The third party acts under the supervision of the medical practitioner^{vii}. | |
| Domestic Violence | <p>From May 2008, a payment of \$1 per Standardised Whole Patient Equivalent (SWPE) per year will be available to practices that meet the requirements of the new PIP Domestic Violence Incentive (capped at \$4,000 per annum)^{viii}.</p> <p>To be eligible for the PIP Domestic Violence Incentive, practices will need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the PIP; • Be located in a Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) 3-7 location; and • Ensure that an appropriately trained and qualified General Practice Nurse or AHW is available for the minimum number of sessions per week to act as a referral point to domestic violence support services for people experiencing domestic violence^{ix}. <p>The role of AHWs and General Practice Nurses in the PIP Domestic Violence Incentive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise indicators of domestic violence and/or risk of domestic violence; | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware of local services that respond to domestic violence;• Understand and provide patients with a range of referral options;• Understand and provide patients experiencing domestic violence with safety options;• Discuss and follow safety strategies for staff; and• Develop self awareness including recognition of symptoms of stress or burnout and seek appropriate support. |
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ⁱ Aboriginal Health Workers in NSW have qualifications in Certificate III or higher in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. The competencies for Level III AHW include:

- Facilitate communication between clients and service providers
- Process and maintain workplace information
- Contribute to OHS processes
- Comply with infection control policies and procedures in health work
- Work in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health care context
- Advocate for the rights and needs of community members
- Provide information about social and emotional support
- Undertake basic health assessments
- Plan and implement basic health care
- Assist with basic health screening, promotion and education services
- Provide information and support on environmental health issues
- Identify community health issues, needs and strategies
- Apply first aid.

ⁱⁱ A General Practice Nurse is defined as a Registered Nurse or an Enrolled Nurse who is employed by or whose services are otherwise retained by, a general practice. For the purposes of this document, Aboriginal Medical Services are included as a general practice.

ⁱⁱⁱ Enrolled Nurses in general practice must be aware of the supervisory arrangements that need to be in place and their responsibilities when nursing care is delegated to them. This information can be obtained from the Nurses and Midwives Board of NSW. For more information visit <http://www.nmb.nsw.gov.au/>

^{iv} For more information on General Practice Nurse item numbers, visit <http://www9.health.gov.au/mbs/fullDisplay.cfm?type=note&q=NotelD&q=M.2>

^v For more information on GP Management Plans and Team Care Arrangements, visit <http://www9.health.gov.au/mbs/search.cfm?q=721&sopt=S> and <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pcd-programs-epc-chronicdisease-pdf-qas>

^{vi} For more information on AHWs in Team Care Arrangements (Item 10950), visit <http://www9.health.gov.au/mbs/search.cfm?q=10950&sopt=S>

^{vii} For more information on Child, Adult and Older Person's Health Checks, visit http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/patients/files/older_age_health_assessments.pdf and <http://www9.health.gov.au/mbs/search.cfm?q=710&sopt=S>

^{viii} For more information on the new PIP Domestic Violence Program, visit

<http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/incentives/pip/files/pip-news-update-feb08.pdf> and
http://www.lifeline.org.au/learn_more/lifeline_training_and_education/rto_training/divert

^{viii} Training is available for General Practice Nurses and Aboriginal Health Workers in Rural and Remote Areas (RRMA) areas 3-7. Lifeline Australia provides the training in rural and remote locations across Australia from February 2008, as well as offering the e-learning option for those unable to attend the face to face training. Please go to www.lifeline.org.au/learn_more/lifeline_training_and_education/rto_training/divert for training dates and locations.

The Education Centre Against Violence, through NSW Health, also provides training opportunities for AHWs and Nurses. Go to <http://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/ecav/index.asp?pg=0&ts=C> for course details. Please ensure you contact Lifeline on 02 6215 9400 to determine whether the course you are wishing to attend meets the criteria for the PIP Domestic Violence Incentive.