Decision-making process for expanding scope of registered nursing practice

Before considering an expansion of practice the following issues and questions should be considered in a collaborative manner by both the nurse and the employer:

Is there evidence that the expansion of scope of nursing practice will improve the health outcome of the health consumer? Is there an appropriate rationale for a registered nurse to undertake this activity?



If no to any, further planning and consultation are needed and referral may be necessary in the meantime.

YES

Is the role or activity supported by any legislation or professional standards?*



Refer to appropriate health practitioner or health care provider and collaborate for ongoing care.

YES

- Has the nurse considered any potential risk(s) and developed strategies to avoid them?
- Are there policies and procedures as part of an organisational risk management framework that support this practice?
- Will the organisation culture and interdisciplinary team accept the change?

NO

YES

- Have the following been determined:
 - acceptable level of educational preparation required?
 - acceptable level of theory and supervised clinical practice?
- · Has a process been established:
 - to assess competencies for expanded practice?
 - for ongoing education to maintain competence for the expanded scope of practice?
 - to access other health professionals to support the activity?

NO

If no to any, further planning and consultation are needed to consider what needs to occur for these to be developed.

YES

Is the nurse educationally prepared and competent to perform the activity?

Is the nurse confident of their ability to perform the activity safely?

Does the nurse understand their level of accountability?



YES

Is there on going monitoring and evaluation of the expanded activity?



YES

Proceed with activity.

(Adapted from Nurses Board of Victoria, 2008)

If 'Yes' to all, then it is appropriate to proceed with the expansion to practice but if the context changes the issues and questions must be reapplied.

If 'No' to any, the situation requires review, further planning and consultation. Referral may be necessary in the meantime.

* Standards may be developed by national professional associations or by an expert group convened by national groups. Legislation can be a barrier to nurses performing some roles, e.g. signing death certificates.