



Response from the Drug and Alcohol Nurses of Australasia (DANA)

Proposed Registration standard: Endorsement for scheduled medicines for registered nurses prescribing in partnership

Question 1

Do you agree that suitably qualified and experienced registered nurses should be able to hold an endorsement to prescribe scheduled medicines in partnership with a partner prescriber?

DANA agrees that suitably qualified and experienced registered nurses should be able to hold an endorsement to prescribe scheduled medicines in partnership with a partner prescriber and commends the NMBA's suggestion that Nurse Practitioners perform this partnership role. In addition to the clinical governance framework outlined in the consultation paper, DANA recommends inclusion of compulsory education around problematic drug and alcohol use and medication interactions. DANA also recommends the importance of screening for these issues as part of a comprehensive approach to registered nurse prescribing of medications is included.

Question 2

After reading the proposed registration standard and guidelines, in your view, are there any additional elements that should be considered by organisations in establishing governance arrangements for prescribing in partnership?

As outlined above, DANA recommends compulsory education for nurses intending to prescribe in partnership regarding medication interactions with alcohol and other drugs. DANA believes this forms a key part of risk assessment as outlined in the consultation paper; additionally, nurses prescribing under a partnership model should have access to a suitably qualified and experienced alcohol and other drug nurse practitioner to guide prescribing decisions when problematic alcohol and other drug use is detected. Ideally, detection would take place through universal screening, which DANA supports unequivocally.

Question 3

Two years' full-time equivalent post initial registration experience has been proposed as a requirement for applying for endorsement. Do you think this is sufficient level of experience?

DANA believes that a prescriptive timeframe for experience regarding nurse prescribing is a difficult to quantify, especially when concerning specialist settings such as alcohol and other drug treatment and mental health. Complexity in presentations in these settings may make prescribing decisions significantly more difficult, therefore DANA commends the NMBA's

recommendation that educational requirements are implemented in addition to the two-year experience prerequisite for prescribing in partnership. DANA again reiterates that inclusion of content in this mandatory education includes recognising and detecting problematic alcohol and other use, the impact of alcohol and other drug use on prescribing decisions and awareness of complexity inherent in patients who present with problematic alcohol and other drug use issues.

Question 4

The NMBA is proposing that the education for registered nurses should be two units of study that addresses the NPS Prescribing Competencies Framework. Do you think this level of additional education would appropriately prepare an RN to prescribe in partnership?

DANA believes the proposal of two units of study prior to commencing in a prescribing in partnership arrangement is a positive step towards safe prescribing, however again would like to take the opportunity to outline the importance of education in alcohol and other drug use as a key component of safe prescribing. DANA understands that this is outlined in performance criteria 1.2.3 of the NPS Prescribing Competencies Framework, however we feel that given documented historical low assessment rates (for example Griffiths et al, 2007) for these issues attention must be paid to correctly assessing for alcohol and other drug use in tandem with prescribing decisions.

Question 5

a) Should a period of supervised practice be required for the endorsement?

Yes No

Comment:

b) If a period of supervised practice was required for the endorsement, would a minimum of three months full time equivalent supervised practice be sufficient?

Yes, No If no, please describe why

DANA believes a period of supervised practice should be required for this endorsement. Again, we recognise that a prescriptive period of practice is difficult to define given various clinical scenarios and individual experience and skill, however reiterate the importance of providing support for nurses undertaking their supervised practice period, including access to experienced and qualified alcohol and other drug nurse practitioners to assist with issues arising in prescribing for this patient cohort.