

Position Statement

Nurse Practitioner Prescriptive and Referral Privilege

The College of Emergency Nursing Australasia Ltd. (CENA), advocate that Emergency Nurse Practitioners have unlimited prescriptive and referral authority within their scope of practice in both National and International localities.

Nurse Practitioners practice at an advanced level and have completed formal educational programs beyond that of the registered nurse. This advanced education includes pathophysiology and pharmacology that prepares a Nurse Practitioner to diagnose, prescribe medications, order investigations and treatments within their specialty area. Nurse Practitioners make independent and collaborative decisions about health care needs of individuals, families, and groups across the life span. Four decades of research has concluded that Nurse Practitioners practising within their scope of practice provide safe, cost-effective, quality health care. Prescribing medications and the ordering of radiological and pathology investigations is essential to a Nurse Practitioners practice.

Nurse Practitioners are registered or authorised by their respective state, territory or countries Nursing Board and/or Council. In many incidences Nurse Practitioners serve on these Nursing Boards and/or Councils and many varied advisory committees for advanced nursing practice. This process actively promotes patient/client safety and competent, advanced best practice nursing. The College of Emergency Nursing Australasia Ltd. (CENA) advocates that local or national regulatory bodies regulate Nurse Practitioner practice and prescriptive authority. The College of Emergency Nursing Australasia Ltd. (CENA) also advocates that Nurse Practitioners participate in annual professional development in areas such as pharmacology, diagnostics and specialty specific knowledge.

The ability of Nurse Practitioners to prescribe medications, order investigative procedures, conduct health care interventions and refer patients for specialist investigation and/or management, without restriction, within their scope of practice, is essential to provide cost-effective, best practice, quality health care for diverse populations across the life span.

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This Position Statement on Nurse Practitioner Prescriptive and Referral Privilege has been adapted from the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, Position Statement on Nurse Practitioner Prescriptive Privilege, 2002.