Review of Nurses and Midwives in the Prescribing and Administration of Medicinal Products:

PROGRESS REPORT - December 2004
The Review of Nurses and Midwives in the Prescribing and Administration of Medicinal Projects, which will be completed in Spring 2005, is a comprehensive review of medication management by nurses and midwives. It is a joint project of An Bord Altranais and the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery. This is a summary of progress to date and an outline of proposed concluding activities.

The Steering Committee for the Review represents members of the nursing, midwifery, medicine, pharmacy and education professions, health board management, as well as representatives from public and patient organisations, with the President of An Bord Altranais as Chairperson. The Committee has met on a quarterly basis from December 2001 to the present. A project team was appointed to co-ordinate the project.
Steering Committee Membership

Ms. Anne Carrigy, Chairperson, President of An Bord Altranais
Dr. Cecily Begley, Director of School of Nursing and Midwifery Studies, Trinity College Dublin
Dr William Blunnie, Irish Medical Council, (Resigned August 2004, awaiting replacement)
Ms. Mary Durkin, An Bord Altranais
Ms. Mary Farrelly, National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery
Mr. Pearse Finnegan, National Council
Mr. Pat Gaughan, Health Board Executive
Ms. Margaret Hanahoe, Community Midwife
Dr. Velma Harkins, Irish College of General Practitioners
Ms. Colette Hempenstal, Public Representative
Ms. Marie Keane, National Council
Ms. Catherine Killilea, Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit
Ms. Veronica Kow, An Bord Altranais
Mr. Matthew Lynch, Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
Dr. Kathleen Mac Lellan, Head of Professional Development, National Council
Ms. Mary Mahon, Irish Association of Directors for Nursing and Midwifery
Ms. Mary McCarthy, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health and Children
Mr. Tom McGuinn, Chief Pharmacist, Department of Health and Children
Mr. Stephen McMahon, Public Representative
Ms. Catherine McTiernan, An Bord Altranais
Ms. Sheila O'Malley, An Bord Altranais
Ms. Yvonne O'Shea, Chief Executive Officer, National Council
Ms. Mary Power, Nursing Alliance
Ms. Simonetta Ryan, Principal Officer, Department of Health and Children
Ms. Valerie Small, Advanced Nurse Practitioner

In Attendance:
Ms. Anne-Marie Ryan, Chief Education Officer, An Bord Altranais
Ms. Kathleen Walsh, Project Officer
Ms. Denise Carroll, Project Assistant
The Review was established as a result of the recommendations made in the Report of the Commission on Nursing - A Blueprint for the Future (Government of Ireland, 1998) and the Review of Scope of Practice for Nursing and Midwifery (An Bord Altranais, 2000). The Steering Committee has examined the concepts of medication management and prescriptive authority, founded on the Project’s terms of reference, with the objective of encouraging nurses and midwives to reflect upon, define and advance their own scope of practice in this critical area of collaborative health care.

**Terms of Reference for the Review of Nurses and Midwives in the Prescribing and Administration of Medicinal Products**

- Review of current practice, identifying relevant issues
- Review of appropriate international literature and experience
- Review of national and international legislation relating to nurse and midwife prescribing
- Review of the Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on the Administration of Medical Preparations (An Bord Altranais, 2000)
- Review of intra- and inter-professional issues and their implications for nurse and midwife prescribing
- Consideration of the circumstances in which nurses and midwives might prescribe
- Identification of pilot sites suitable for the initiation of nurse and midwife prescribing
- Identification and delivery of educational preparation necessary to support nurse and midwife prescribing
- Consideration of documentation necessary to support nurse and midwife prescribing
- Initiation and evaluation of nurse and midwife prescribing in pilot sites
- Production of detailed guidelines including a framework for nurse and midwife prescribing where appropriate
Background

Irish health care services are currently undergoing significant changes and transformations in order to meet the needs of the individual patient/client and the community in general. Nurses and midwives are examining their own roles and practices in providing and advancing quality care. Through consultative exercises carried out as part of the work of the Commission on Nursing and Scope of Practice project nurses and midwives have identified medication management, and prescribing in particular, as a central activity in meeting the health care needs of the individual and community. Innovative approaches for the delivery of holistic patient-centred care are being considered and implemented across many health care settings and practice areas such as nurse- and midwife-led clinics and multidisciplinary primary care units to serve community needs.

These innovations encourage individual practitioners, service providers and health care professional organisations to effectively utilise the resources, skills and knowledge of all members of the health care team to recognise the value of collaboration. A single practitioner cannot meet the complex needs of the health care consumer. It is at this crucial time, with the creation of new services and positions, that the potential for the continued advancement and expansion of the practice of nursing and midwifery can be maximised by embracing collaborative practice, which will lead to the better delivery of high-quality health care.

Literature Review

The Project Team has undertaken an extensive literature review of the international experience and associated outcomes of nurse/midwife prescribing. Research studies involving nurse prescribing and the experiences of other countries show that this expansion of practice can assist in improving the delivery of health care services, allowing nurses and midwives to fully contribute their skills, knowledge and experience in a safe, effective and holistic manner for the benefit of the patient and community at large.
The legislative and health care policies of other countries show that interdisciplinary collaborative efforts between health care professionals, regulatory organisations and government policy makers are essential to ensuring a strong framework for nurse/midwife prescribing in Ireland.

This literature review has greatly influenced the plan of action of the project and has provided significant information in establishing the methodological approaches for its activities. The literature review will be incorporated into the Final Report.

**Revision of the Guidance Document on Medications**

*Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on Medication Management* (An Bord Altranais, 2003) has been prepared by the Project Team under the direction of a sub-committee of the Steering Committee. It is a revision of *Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on the Administration of Medical Preparations* (An Bord Altranais, 2000), which had previously provided information to assist the professions in undertaking the administration of medications and other related responsibilities.

This document required updating and revising in recognition of recommendations made in the *Review of the Scope of Practice for Nursing and Midwifery, Final Report* (An Bord Altranais, 2000). The evolutionary nature of health care systems and services, and the accompanying changes to the traditional routines and activities of nurses and midwives with medications provided additional impetus for greater guidance by the regulatory body.

Medication management, which is formally introduced in the new guidelines as a critical element of nursing/midwifery care, is the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of nursing and midwifery care (in association with prescribed medical care) as it relates to medicinal product use by the patient. *The Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework* (An Bord Altranais, 2000) was the foundation for the document as it provides the guidance and support on concerns related to clinical practice and the accompanying professional accountability.
The revision establishes a firm link between standards for safe medication management practice in accordance with the individual nurse’s/midwife’s scope of professional practice. The nursing and midwifery professions are encouraged to share their concerns and questions about the content of *Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on Medication Management* as future revisions are undertaken and can contact the Project Office at An Bord Altranais with this information.

**Medication Management Query Database**

Since the start of the Review, the Project Team has received many queries from the profession and others regarding medication management. These queries have been analysed, using a specially designed database, and have provided valuable additional data on the current practices and concerns of nurses and midwives. The analysis directly influenced the revision of the Guidance document, where specific concerns were addressed.

**Medication Management Seminars**

In the early stages of the project, the Steering Committee decided that nurses and midwives should be provided with a comprehensive overview of medication management, including prescribing to increase their awareness of this expanded scope of practice.

The Project Team conducted a series of Medication Management seminars during November and December 2002. Over 1,400 nurses and midwives attended the 20 seminars, which were held throughout the country. Focus groups were conducted at the seminars to examine their current practices and the data collated was used to inform the needs assessment survey. The focus groups were devised on the basis of the practice areas of the nurses and midwives, i.e. public health, paediatric and medical/surgical, and generated considerable discussion and sharing of information amongst participants.
**Needs Assessment Survey for Nurse and Midwife Prescribing**

The data collected from the focus groups was used to develop the Needs Assessment for Nurse and Midwife Prescribing survey, which had the following objectives:

- To determine which models of prescribing are needed by nurses and midwives
- To identify which nurses and midwives need these prescribing models
- To identify the practice settings in which the prescribing models are needed
- To outline what nurses and midwives perceive to be the main benefits of the prescribing models
- To highlight the resources needed by nurses and midwives for implementation of the prescribing models
- To explain why some nurses and midwives do not want to prescribe
- To determine which categories of medications nurses and midwives would need to prescribe.

The Register of Nurses maintained by An Bord Altranais was used to obtain the random sample of 3,000 nurses and midwives and excluded those on the Inactive File. The Needs Assessment survey was conducted during this past summer and a response rate of 35% was obtained. The data is currently being analysed and will be reported in the Final Report.

**Exploration of Need Survey**

In addition to surveying the nursing and midwifery professions an Exploration of Need survey has been created to ascertain the views of key stakeholders on the need for nurse/midwife prescribing. The organisations and agencies selected to participate represent the views of patients, the general public, medical and pharmacy professions and health care management.
Extended comments are invited on issues such as meeting patient/client needs and improving the delivery of services. The responses received will be analysed and reported in the Final Report.

**Pilot Sites for Collaborative Prescribing**

One of the principal terms of reference for the Review was to identify pilot sites for the initiation and evaluation of nurse/midwife prescribing. The literature review showed that a number of other countries had utilised a pilot site model (in conjunction with legislative changes) in introducing prescriptive authority for nurses. These included the United Kingdom, areas of Australia and the United States of America, and their experiences provided valuable data for the Project Team.

The Steering Committee, in the development of pilot sites, decided to introduce and implement a model of collaborative prescribing utilising medication protocols. This was in line with the legislative review and consultation with international nursing authorities on prescriptive authority.

During the first half of the project, the Project Team established the supporting structures for the pilot site study: the development of a protocol framework and the competencies for nurse/midwife collaborative prescribing, and selection of a school for the delivery of the education programme to prepare nurses/midwives for this expansion of practice. The experiences and regulatory and professional frameworks for the implementation of nurse/midwife prescribing in other countries provided additional information in creating these structures. The interdisciplinary nature of collaborative prescribing using the protocol model, requires the commitment of both medical practitioners in their role as clinical mentors and pharmacists to assist with the other health care professionals in drawing up the site-specific protocols.
Sixteen sites were selected representing a diversity of practice settings across acute and community care sectors. The selection of the sites was facilitated through the nursing and midwifery planning and development units, and the directors of nursing and midwifery. The original sites were:

- Accident and Emergency Department, Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Dublin
- Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Rotunda Hospital, Dublin
- Clondalkin Mental Health Services, Dublin
- Department of Genitourinary Medicine and Infectious Diseases, St James's Hospital, Dublin
- St Luke's Hospital, Dublin
- The Domino and Homebirth Scheme, National Maternity Hospital, Dublin
- Heart Failure Clinic, Midland Regional Hospital, Tullamore, Co Offaly
- Cardiac Care Unit, Limerick Regional Hospital, Co Limerick
- St. John of God, North East Services, St. Mary's, Dunleer, Co Louth
- Maternity Services, Sligo General Hospital, Co Sligo
- St Finbarr's Hospital, Co Cork
- Lifford Health Centre, Lifford, Co Donegal
- Virginia Primary Care Team, Virginia, Co Cavan
- St Patrick's Hospital, Waterford
- Accident and Emergency Department, Waterford Regional Hospital, Waterford
- Public Health Nursing, Innisnaun, Co Galway.
Thirty-seven nurses and midwives initially enrolled in the six-month education programme delivered by Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and 32 successfully completed the course in September 2003.

Commencement of the implementation and evaluation phase of the pilot study was deferred because the legal framework supporting the project was questioned by a number of participating sites. The legal issues were brought to the attention of the Executive Staff of An Bord Altranais and the National Council who presented these concerns to the Department of Health and Children (DoHC). The advice received by the DoHC from the Office of the Attorney General has allowed the re-establishment of the pilot site study. The implementation phase began in November 2004 and is due to end in February 2005.

During this three-month period, the nurse and midwife participants will be using the locally developed medication protocols to supply medication to the individual patient/client thereby implementing a model of collaborative prescribing. Under this model the nurse/midwife has been educated to use the prescribing process needed to prescribe a medication, but this process stops short of writing the individual prescription. Legislative changes are required to give authority to nurses and midwives to write a prescription, as currently only medical practitioners, dentists and veterinarians have this authority. It is the participants’ clinical decision making, as it relates to the prescribing process that will be evaluated by their clinical mentors, through their review of the nurse's/midwife's documentation of patient care using an audit tool designed by the Project Team.

As part of the evaluation of this study, patients/clients receiving care as per the medication protocols will be asked to comment on their satisfaction with the information that the participating nurse/midwife has provided on their condition and the medicines needed to treat it. At the pilot's conclusion in February 2005 the perceptions of the nurses/midwives, medical practitioners and pharmacists on this model of prescribing for their practice will be collected and will be presented in the Final Report.
The Review of Nurses and Midwives in the Prescribing and Administration of Medicinal Products project, will conclude in the spring of 2005 and it's findings will be published in a comprehensive Final Report. The Steering Committee will make recommendations based on the results and analysis of the research conducted as part of the focus groups, the needs assessment survey, the exploration of need survey with stakeholders and the pilot study for collaborative prescribing.

The issues surrounding the expansion of medication management practices of nurses and midwives, including prescribing, are particularly complex. These issues include changes in medicinal products legislation, governmental health policy development, and the educational and professional requirements for nurses and midwives (particularly as they relate to scope of practice). The diversity of approaches utilised during the Review (i.e. national seminars, focus groups, needs assessment and continual consultation with stakeholders) have provided a robust foundation in which to further advance the plan for the introduction of nurse/midwife prescribing.

The Review and the Steering Committee's recommendations are set to further the agenda and guide the way for greater discussion and subsequent action by the government and health service providers in the introduction of nurse/midwife prescribing.

Additional information about the Review can be obtained from the Project Team at An Bord Altranais. 

Telephone: (01) 6398502/557
email: kwalsh@nursingboard.ie or dcarroll@nursingboard.ie

Quarterly updates will continue in the newsletters of An Bord Altranais and The National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery until the conclusion of the project.
17 December 2004

Re: Review of Nurses and Midwives in the Prescribing and Administration of Medicinal Products – Progress Report

Dear Colleague,

Please find enclosed the progress report of the Review of Nurses and Midwives in the Prescribing and Administration of Medicinal Products. This is a joint project of An Bord Altranais and the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery. The report is a summary of progress to date and an outline of proposed concluding activities. Additional copies of the report may be accessed by contacting the Project Office at An Bord Altranais or on-line at www.nursingboard.ie and www.ncnm.ie. The project is due to conclude in spring 2005 and its findings will be published in a Final Report.

Mr. Eugene Donoghue
CEO, An Bord Altranais

Ms. Yvonne O’Shea
CEO, National Council