Collaborative Practice Agreement (CPA) for Nurses and Midwives with Prescriptive Authority

Second Edition

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1. Overview of the purpose and extent of a written collaborative practice agreement (CPA)

The Practice Standards for Nurses and Midwives with Prescriptive Authority (An Bord Altranais, 2007) are devised by An Bord Altranais to provide regulatory guidance for the professional practice of nurses and midwives engaged in prescribing medicinal products. Registered nurse prescribers (RNP) and health service providers/employers should refer to the Practice Standards in the development of clinical governance structures at local and national level to support the implementation of nurse/midwife prescribing where it is considered necessary and can be appropriately supported.

The Decision-Making Framework for Nurse and Midwife Prescribing (An Bord Altranais, 2007) within the Practice Standards states that a nurse/midwife with prescriptive authority (recognised as a registered nurse prescriber) should have a written collaborative practice agreement (CPA) with a medical practitioner (approved by the health service provider/employer) in order for the nurse/midwife to prescribe medications within her/his scope of practice at her/his place of employment.

This document provides guidelines for developing CPAs for the implementation of nurse/midwife prescribing and provides nurses and midwives, medical practitioners and health service providers/employers with a framework for the development (and approval) of CPAs.

The underlining principles of the CPA include:

- The CPA is the vehicle that An Bord Altranais has developed to ensure that the requirements as outlined in the medicines legislation are upheld and that clear lines of communication have been identified within the health care setting.
- The CPA serves as a tool to ensure that communication structures have been established between the RNP and the medical practitioner regarding the care of their patients and agreed by the employer.
- The CPA defines the parameters of the RNP's scope of practice. Whilst recognising the responsibility of the medical practitioner to the patient, the individual nurse/midwife is accountable for her/his practice. This means that she/he is professionally accountable as an individual for her/his prescribing decisions. This encompasses the consultation and referral arrangements when a patient's care extends beyond the RNP's scope of practice.
- The CPA is drawn up with the agreement of the RNP, the medical practitioner and the employer outlining the parameters of the RNP's prescribing authority (i.e. her/his scope of practice). The principles of professional accountability, responsibility, competence and clinical governance underpin the CPA.
- The CPA provides a template for the development, audit and evaluation of the RNP's prescribing practices within the health care setting.

The guidance provided by this document takes cognisance of the Practice Standards published by An Bord Altranais and the regulatory requirements of the medicines regulations of the Medicinal Products ( Prescription and Control of Supply) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (Statutory Instrument (SI) No. 201 of 2007) and the Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (SI No. 200 of 2007). The medicines legislation provides for the legal authority to nurses and midwives to prescribe. This authority is based upon the following conditions being satisfied:

- The nurse/midwife is employed by a health service provider in a hospital, nursing home, clinic or other health service setting (including any case where the health service is provided in a private home).
- The medicinal product is one that would be given in the usual course of the service provided in the health service setting in which the nurse/midwife is employed.
- The prescription is issued in the usual course of the provision of that health service.
In addition, the 2007 Regulations allow a health service provider to determine further conditions in limiting the prescriptive authority of the registered nurse prescriber. An Bord Altranais Personal Identification Number (PIN) of the registered nurse/midwife must also be stated on the prescription.

The scope and context of practice for the registered nurse prescriber should be determined with reference to the competencies for prescriptive authority and practice standards that a nurse or midwife should possess and adhere to as part of their professional responsibilities. Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on Medication Management (An Bord Altranais, 2007) must also inform the prescribing and medication management practices of the nurse or midwife.

The written CPA should be developed prior to the health service provider/employer authorising the registered nurse prescriber to prescribe in the organisation. The guidelines can be used to support CPAs based upon the administrative processes and clinical governance structures of the health service provider/employer. The CPA should contain at a minimum the detailed information as determined by the Nurses Rules, 2007 Section 3.10a (An Bord Altranais, 2007) and the Practice Standards for Nurses and Midwives with Prescriptive Authority (An Bord Altranais, 2007).

A drug formulary may be used as part of the guidelines and should be submitted to the health service provider/employer’s drug and therapeutics committee for review and approval. The authority to prescribe should extend only to the registered nurse prescriber and relate to those categories of medications described or referenced in the written CPA and approved by the drugs and therapeutics committee.

2. Criteria for a Collaborative Practice Agreement

In this document, An Bord Altranais provides the criteria for the components of the CPA, which are based upon a review of the literature and international experience. It also considers the national implementation process for the introduction of nurse/midwife prescribing inclusive of the criteria devised for site and student selection.

The CPA should include the following:

- Full name, work addresses, telephone numbers, email and An Bord Altranais registration number (PIN) of the registered nurse prescriber
- Full name, work address and telephone number, confirmation of registration with the Medical Council of Ireland and medical speciality of the medical practitioner collaborating in the agreement
- A list of all other clinics or locations besides the primary organisation/practice setting listed above where the registered nurse prescriber intends to prescribe
- Full name, title/position of individual (e.g. director of nursing/midwifery or service manager) within the health service provider/employer authorised to approve CPAs and audit requirements of prescriptive practices
- General description of the practice setting to include population and conditions for which the registered nurse prescriber has responsibility
- A listing of specific medications (generic names) and/or categories of medications the registered nurse prescriber is competent to prescribe, any organisational requirement which requires the involvement and/or review by the drugs and therapeutic committee or other relevant structures should be noted with the list
- Description of the conditions, if any, the health service provider/employer has placed on the registered nurse prescriber’s prescriptive authority
• The date of the commencement of the collaborative practice agreement with accompanying signatures of registered nurse prescriber, collaborating medical practitioner and individual within the health service organisation (e.g. director of nursing/midwifery or service manager) authorised to approve the CPA.

• A date should be stipulated for the annual review and renewal of the CPA.

The registered nurse prescriber is responsible for maintaining continued competence for her/his prescriptive authority as per An Bord Altranais (based on forthcoming guidance and requirements) and the health service provider’s/employer’s policy.

All CPAs are considered null and void on the termination/movement of employment for which the CPA is originally intended.

Written practice agreements should terminate automatically if the registered nurse prescriber or medical practitioner no longer has an active unrestricted registration.

3. Notification of CPA to An Bord Altranais

The Collaborative Practice Agreement Form is available from An Bord Altranais.

The registered nurse prescriber shall provide An Bord Altranais with a copy of the signed CPA within five working days of its commencement. The registered nurse prescriber shall notify An Bord Altranais in writing within five working days of any termination of a CPA and provide the reason for this termination (e.g. change of employment).