

The Introduction of Nurse and Midwife Prescribing in Ireland: An Overview

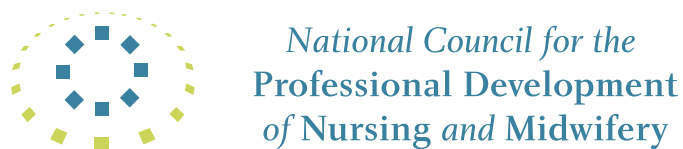


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The Introduction of Nurse and Midwife Prescribing in Ireland

The Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney TD, in October 2005 identified the introduction of nurse and midwife prescribing as a high priority. On 1 February, 2007, following the establishment of a Resource and Implementation Group and the drafting of the necessary regulations, the Minister announced her plans for the introduction of the new initiative in 2007.

“Improving patient care is at the heart of this initiative on nurse/midwife prescribing. In particular, I believe that in services such as palliative care, care of the older person and in nurse led clinics, patients will receive earlier interventions and therefore a better service. The basis of our health service should be that patients receive the right care from the right person in the right setting” the Minister said.

In autumn 2007 the first cohort of nurses and midwives will complete the approved education programme that will enable them to apply for registration with An Bord Altranais as a Registered Nurse Prescriber. This booklet provides an overview of the context in which nurse and midwife prescribing is being introduced and describes the roles of the key partners engaged in moving this agenda forward.

The Context for Introducing Nurse and Midwife Prescribing in Ireland

In Ireland the *Report of the Commission on Nursing: A Blueprint for the Future* identified “a need to allow greater flexibility to nurses and midwives in the administration of non-prescribed drugs according to agreed protocols with medical practitioners” (Government of Ireland 1998, p37). The Commission on Nursing therefore recommended that An Bord Altranais review the guidelines to the administration or application of non-prescribed drugs by nurses and midwives (Government of Ireland 1998, 4.15).

Three years later in 2001 An Bord Altranais and the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery jointly conducted and funded a project to review the prescribing and administration of medicinal products by nurses and midwives. The steering committee for the project comprised representatives from the two statutory bodies and the Department of Health and Children. Other areas of nursing and midwifery were represented, as were patient and service user groups, the medical and pharmaceutical professions, various agencies and nursing unions.

The project included an examination of international developments in nurse and midwife prescribing and a series of activities exploring the implementation of nurse and midwife prescribing in Ireland. The review summarised international research studies on nurse and midwife prescribing, identifying numerous benefits for patients and service users including:

- appropriate and safe prescribing
- patient satisfaction
- convenience and greater accessibility for patients
- nurses as providers of information

- patients having improved compliance with their medications
- fewer pharmacological interventions considered
- appropriate clinical decision making
- cost-effectiveness.

The project was completed in June 2005 with the publication of *The Review of Nurses and Midwives in the Prescribing and Administration of Medicinal Products*. The publication contained five recommendations, one of which was that prescriptive authority should be extended to nurses and midwives subject to regulations (An Bord Altranais and the National Council, 2005).

A number of trends, both in Ireland and internationally, further supported this recommendation, such as:

- social and demographic change (for example, ageing population)
- changing service configuration for patients with increased specialisation of services (for example, diabetes, asthma, oncology)
- value for money (including a return on investment in the education of health professionals)
- implementation of the European Working Time Directive
- a greater focus on community services.

The Development of the Legislation

In March 2006 the Minister for Health and Children introduced primary legislation to allow prescriptive authority for nurses and midwives subject to conditions specified in regulations. The *Irish Medicines Board (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006* (No.3 of 2006) (Section 16 (1)(ii)) contains an enabling provision for the extension of prescriptive authority to nurses and midwives.

The Department of Health and Children launched a public consultation on the extension of prescriptive authority to nurses and midwives on 11 May, 2006. There were 122 submissions received and the majority of those were generally positive and supportive of nurse and midwife prescribing. The Department's rationale for the extension of prescriptive authority to nurses/midwives was to improve services to patients, reduce health service delays and to deploy the education and expertise of nurses and midwives more effectively. The result would lead to more integrated care for patients, improved delivery in the acute sector and earlier intervention in the community and primary care settings. This was supported by strong international evidence from the United States of America, with over 30 years of experience of nurse prescribing, and the United Kingdom, with policy and practice in this area since 1987.

Subsequently, the Minister for Health and Children, on the 1 May 2007 signed into law:

- the *Irish Medicines Board (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 (Commencement) Order 2007*
- *Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Regulations 2007*
- and *Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) (Amendment) Regulations 2007*.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the evolution of the nurse and midwife prescribing legislation.

Figure 1 – Evolution of Nurse and Midwife Prescribing Legislation in Ireland



The Legislative Framework for Nurse and Midwife Prescribing

A “twin-track” approach underpins the development of the legislative framework for the introduction of nurse and midwife prescribing. Specifically, the *Irish Medicines Board (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006* and its associated regulations (i.e., the *Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Regulations 2007*, *Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) (Amendment) Regulations 2007*) and the *Nurses Rules 2007* collectively form the basis on which nurse and midwife prescribing became a reality in 2007.

The Regulations associated with the *Irish Medicines Board (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006* attach the following conditions which must be met where nurse or midwife prescribing takes place:

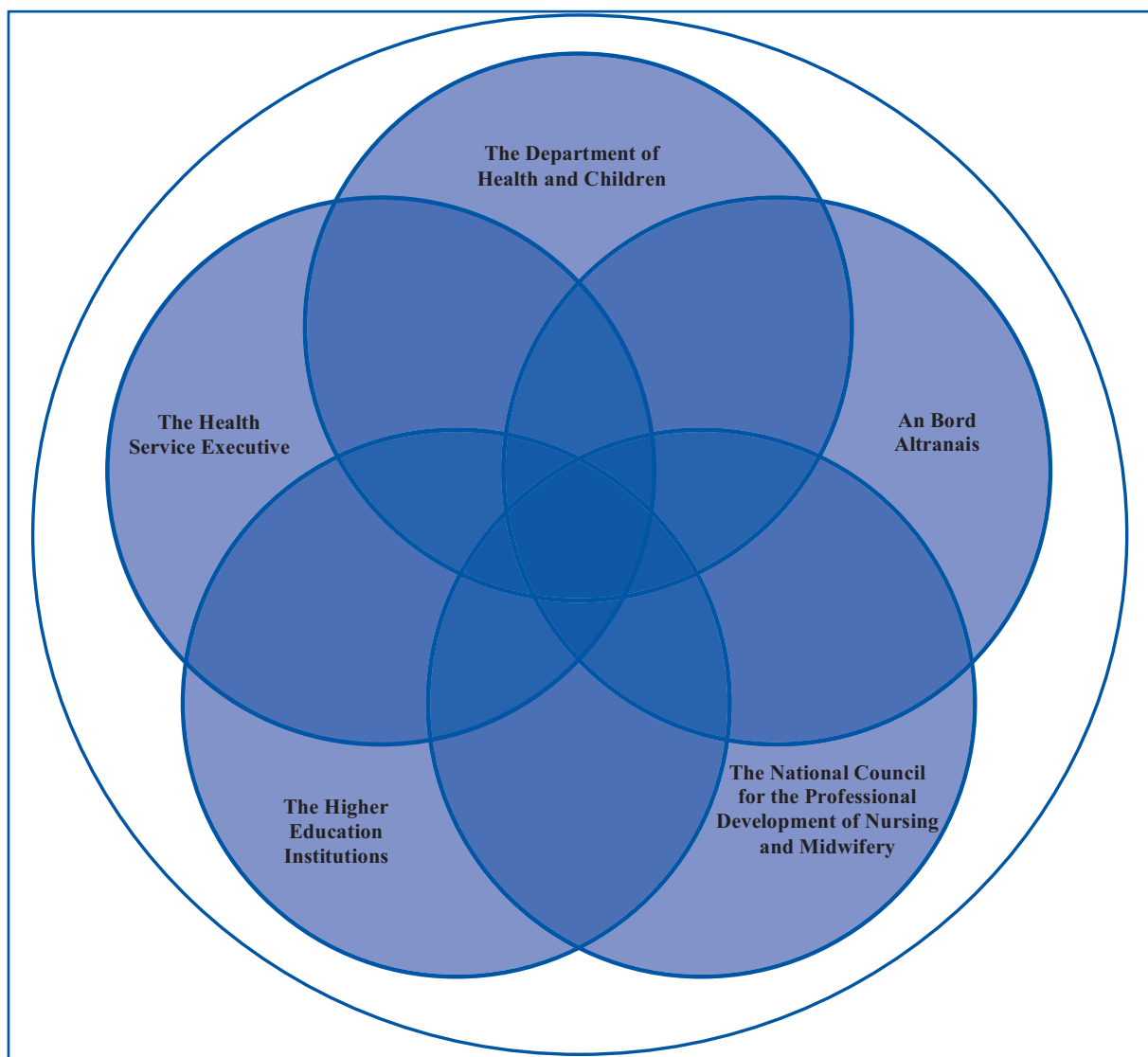
- the nurse or midwife must be employed by a health service provider in a hospital, nursing home clinic or other health service setting (including any case where the health service provider is provided in a private home)
- the medicinal product is one that would be given in the usual course of service 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
- the An Bord Altranais registration number (also known as the Personal Identification Number (PIN)) must be stated on the prescription.

It should also be noted that the Regulations do not inhibit the right of an employer to impose further restrictions including prohibiting a nurse or midwife from prescribing. In addition restrictions are in place on the prescribing of certain controlled drugs. For full details reference must be made to the individual regulations. The Minister has given a commitment to conduct a review the regulations in two years time (2009) to ensure they are working as planned

Partners in the Nurse and Midwife Prescribing Initiative

A number of bodies are currently working in partnership to drive the nurse and midwife prescribing initiative forward including the Department of Health and Children, the Health Service Executive, An Bord Altranais, the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery, the higher education institutions and the nursing unions. These partners are working together to ensure that nurse and midwife prescribing will operate efficiently and effectively to the highest standard in the interest of patients and service users. Figure 2 represents the key partners in the nurse and midwife prescribing initiative.

Figure 2 – Key Partners in the Nurse and Midwife Prescribing Initiative



The Roles of the Key Partners in the Nurse and Midwife Prescribing Initiative

Department of Health and Children

The Department of Health and Children has been involved in the nurse and midwife prescribing project since its inception, ensuring that the evolution of the project has matched developments emerging from the overall health service reform programme. The *Irish Medicines Board (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006* was signed into law in March 2006, thus enabling the Minister for Health and Children to make the necessary regulations for prescriptive authority for nurses and midwives. Following the drafting of the regulations they were reviewed under the *Transparency Directive 98/34/EC* as required by the European Union and were subsequently signed by the Minister.

The Department of Health and Children, with the approval of the Minister, established a Resource and Implementation Group on Nurse and Midwife Prescribing to advise on the regulations to be drafted, and oversee the roll-out of nurse and midwife prescribing on a national basis. The Minister secured additional funding for the Health Service Executive in 2007 for the education of nurse and midwife prescribers.

The Department of Health and Children will:

- undertake a review of the regulations for nurse and midwife prescribing within two years
- develop an overarching mechanism for the evaluation of nurse and midwife prescribing from a service perspective
- assist the Resource and Implementation Group on Nurse and Midwife Prescribing with the development and implementation of an inclusive communication strategy.

Health Service Executive

Established under the *Health Act, 2004*, the Health Service Executive is responsible for providing health and social services for everyone living in Ireland. The Health Service Executive has developed and committed to the *Transformation Programme 2007 – 2010*, with a mission to enable people to live healthier and more fulfilled lives (Health Service Executive, 2006). The vision of the Health Service Executive for 2010 is for everyone to have easy access to high-quality care and services that they have confidence in and that staff are proud to provide. The Programme sets out six transformation priorities and the means by which these will be operationalised, namely through 13 transformation programmes and associated projects. The six transformation priorities are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 – The Health Service Executive’s six transformation priorities

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- Develop integrated services across all stages of the care journey.
 - Configure Primary, Community and Continuing Care services so that they deliver optimal and cost-effective results.
 - Configure hospital services to deliver optimal and cost-effective results.
 - Implement a model for the prevention and management of chronic illness.
 - Implement standards based performance measurement and management throughout the Health Service Executive.
 - Ensure all staff engage in transforming health and social care in Ireland.
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Source: Health Service Executive (2006). Transformation Programme 2007 – 2010.

The nurse and midwife prescribing initiative has enormous potential to contribute to the change required under the six transformation priorities in the Health Service Executive and related agencies (including voluntary hospitals and bodies). Prescriptive authority for nurses and midwives will impact directly on all services and will enhance and improve the health service infrastructure and capability to provide and support innovative, responsive and appropriate service delivery.

The Nursing Service Director, Health Service Executive, who chairs the Resource and Implementation Group on Nurse and Midwife Prescribing, has recently appointed a Director of Nursing and Midwifery and a four-person team to drive forward the prescribing initiative.

The work of the Group is divided into two phases. Phase One primarily focused on terms of reference 1 to 5, while still taking account of number 6 (see Table 2 for the terms of reference). The Minister for Health and Children, on 1 May 2006 signed into law the *Irish Medicines Board (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 (Commencement) Order 2007*, *Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Regulations 2007* and *Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) (Amendment) Regulations 2007* and subsequently the *Nurses Rules 2007*, thereby concluding Phase One of the group’s work. Phase Two is now focused on the broader issues around implementation.

Table 2 – Terms of Reference: Resource and Implementation Group on Nurse and Midwife Prescribing

1. Act as an advisory resource to the Department of Health and Children for clarification of issues arising in relation to both the supply and prescribing of medicines by nurses and midwives.
2. To clarify the situations where supply under protocol is sufficient:
 - a. to clarify situations where supply under protocol is working
 - b. to clarify situations where supply under protocol is feasible but not happening; and
 - c. to advise on administrative and or regulatory requirements needed to support delivery of the above.
3. To identify situations where the boundary between supply and prescribing is unclear and advise on where there is a need for independent prescribing in these situations.
4. To identify settings where there is a need for:
 - a. independent prescribing of prescription drugs excluding controlled drugs; and
 - b. independent prescribing of controlled drugs
5. In advising the Department the group will take account of the following issues:
 - a. clinical governance arrangements needed in settings where prescribing is proposed;
 - b. educational and registration requirements needed to support the Requirements and Standards for Nurse and Midwife Prescribing being developed by An Bord Altranais.
6. To develop and implement a plan for the roll out of nurse and midwife prescribing nationally which takes account of the following:
 - a. identification of sites and practitioners to introduce prescribing
 - b. implementation of required educational programme
 - c. development of clinical governance arrangements for:
 - i. Supply of medicines
 - ii. Independent prescribing; and
 - d. development of a local, regional and national communication strategy for all of the above.

Source: Resource and Implementation Group on Nurse and Midwife Prescribing, November 2006

The Health Service Executive guided by the Resource and Implementation Group on Nurse and Midwife Prescribing will:

- develop and implement a plan for the roll-out of nurse and midwife prescribing
- identify clinical governance structures within service delivery to support appropriate and safe nurse and midwife prescribing
- develop an overarching mechanism for the evaluation of nurse and midwife prescribing from a service perspective
- in partnership with the Department of Health and Children, An Bord Altranais and the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery develop and implement an inclusive communication strategy.

An Bord Altranais

An Bord Altranais is the statutory body whose key functions include the registration and regulation of nurses and midwives in Ireland; regulation of education and training programmes for nurses, midwives and nursing and midwifery students; and the provision of professional guidance.

Its key responsibilities in relation to the nurse and midwife prescribing initiative include:

- constructing regulatory structures for prescriptive authority for nurses and midwives with assistance from the Department of Health and Children
- devising the registration and notification process for nurse and midwife prescribing
- reviewing and approving education programmes aimed at preparing nurse and midwife prescribers in partnership with the School of Nursing, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and the Catherine McAuley School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College, Cork and the approved clinical placement sites
- providing professional guidance to nurses and midwives concerning prescriptive authority and related issues such as clinical governance supports and standards of practice.

An Bord Altranais has also taken responsibility for initiatives in the broader area of medication management which entail:

- devising and disseminating professional guidance on the supply and administration of medications under protocol
- providing professional guidance on medication management by means of the 2007 revision of Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on Medication Management.
- developing a medication management elearning programme in partnership with the National Council to be launched in the autumn of 2007.

Key activities undertaken by An Bord Altranais in 2007 in relation to regulation, education, clinical governance and professional guidance in the area of prescriptive authority are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3 – Summary of Key Activities Undertaken by An Bord Altranais

Professional regulation	<i>Nurses Rules 2007</i> established a division of the Register for nurse prescribers.
	Note 1. <i>Under the Nurses Act, 1985 a midwife is registered within a division of the Nurses Register, therefore a midwife with prescriptive authority will be registered as a nurse prescriber.</i>
	Note 2. <i>Health service providers and the public can verify that a nurse or midwife is registered as a prescriber by either contacting An Bord Altranais directly or viewing the Register on-line.</i>
Education	<i>Nurses Rules 2007</i> provide for the approval of higher education institutions and health service providers in relation to the delivery of education programmes concerning prescriptive authority.
	<i>Requirements and Standards for Education Programmes for Nurses and Midwives with Prescriptive Authority</i> (An Bord Altranais, 2007) stipulates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the minimum entry requirements for admission to the programme • the competencies that must be achieved for successful completion of the programme • the learning outcomes, syllabus, and theoretical and clinical instruction requirements.
Clinical governance and professional guidance	Clinical governance developed with reference to the Resource Implementation Group’s clinical governance criteria.
	<i>Decision-Making Framework for Nurse and Midwife Prescriptive Authority</i> (An Bord Altranais, 2007) illustrates a step-by-step approach for nurses/midwives and health service providers when considering the context and appropriateness of prescribing and the clinical governance supports needed.
	<i>Practice Standards for Nurses and Midwives with Prescriptive Authority</i> (An Bord Altranais, 2007) provides professional guidance on prescriptive authority and medication management, key competencies and safe practices for the prescriber in relation to mechanisms for clinical and self-governance, regulation and accountability.
	The <i>Collaborative Practice Agreement (CPA)</i> (An Bord Altranais, 2007) provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guidelines for developing CPAs for the implementation of nurse and midwife prescribing • a framework for nurses and midwives, medical practitioners and health service providers/employers for the development (and approval) of CPAs.

Many of An Bord Altranais' responsibilities and activities in the current phase of the prescribing initiative are closely linked with those of the National Council for the Development of Nursing and Midwifery particularly with regard to the devising and disseminating professional guidance on the supply and administration of medications under protocol.

National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery

The National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery (National Council) is the statutory body responsible for the development of the clinical career pathway in Ireland (SI No 376, 1999). Through its leading role in the continuing professional development of nurses and midwives the National Council supports developments and provides professional guidance for clinical sites and service areas around the country.

The *Review of Nurses and Midwives in the Prescribing and Administration of Medicinal Products* was conducted jointly by the National Council and An Bord Altranais and brought to a conclusion in June 2005. Subsequently, the two statutory bodies have engaged in a further three-year joint project concerned with implementing the recommendations in the *Review of Nurses and Midwives in the Prescribing and Administration of Medicinal Products*. In the course of this implementation project, activities and initiatives such as the provision of professional guidance in relation to the agreed medication protocol framework and the development of an e-learning programme for medication management are progressing and enhancing standards in medication management.

In the current phase of the prescribing initiative the National Council will assist the Health Service Executive to:

- develop structures and processes at a local level to ensure that nurses and midwives will have adequate opportunities to prescribe in accordance with the clinical governance arrangements devised by An Bord Altranais
- develop local risk management strategies around audit of prescriptive practices, recording and collating adverse events and identify prescriptive errors
- develop a mechanism for dealing promptly with problems and queries relating to nurse and midwife prescribing
- determine best practice in relation to Drugs and Therapeutics Committees in supporting nurse and midwife prescribing, with a view to informing their guidance to health service providers.

Higher Education Institutions

In the current phase of the prescribing initiative, the School of Nursing, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and the Catherine McAuley School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College, Cork are providing the nurse and midwife prescribing education programmes which commenced in April 2007. The formal title of the programme is *Certificate in Nursing (Nurse/Midwife Prescribing)* and the award is at level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. A total of 52 students are currently undertaking the programme at the two locations. The programme, which meets requirements and standards laid down by An Bord Altranais, is being delivered over a six-month period and consists of 28 days of theory. It consists of three core modules:

- Professional Accountability in Nurse and Midwife Prescribing
- Drug Action and Therapeutics
- Systemic Assessment and Evaluation in Patient Care.

In addition, it includes self-directed learning and a 12-day practical clinical element during which the participating nurse or midwife is supervised by a designated medical practitioner. Students currently undertaking the programme have had to meet specific selection criteria, as will any future applicants.

Successful completion of the approved education programme enables graduates to apply for registration as a registered nurse prescriber with An Bord Altranais. A second cohort of students will commence the School of Nursing, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and the Catherine McAuley School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College, Cork the week of the 15 October 2007.

The Resource and Implementation Group on Nurse and Midwife Prescribing identified essential criteria which a health service provider must meet in order to participate in the prescribing initiative. In addition, nurses and midwives applying for the approved education programme must satisfy criteria as determined by higher education institutions and the Resource and Implementation Group on Nurse and Midwife Prescribing. Table 4 outlines essential criteria for both the health service provider and the nurse or midwife.

Table 4 - Essential Criteria

Health Service Provider

In order to participate in the nurse and midwife prescribing initiative the health service provider must have:

- an organisational policy for nurse and midwife prescribing (or will have a policy in place by the time the nurse or midwife completes the education programme)
- an ability to demonstrate that the organisation can safely manage and quality assure prescribing practices
- risk management systems in place and processes for adverse event reporting, incident reporting, reporting of near misses and reporting of medication errors
- in place robust and agreed collaborative practice agreements (described if not already existing)
- identified a named medical practitioner who has agreed to develop the above arrangements
- appropriate mentoring arrangements established
- in place or have access to a drugs and therapeutics committee
- a mechanism to audit the introduction of nurse and midwife prescribing practices.

Nurse and Midwife Entry Requirements

Applicants must satisfy criteria as determined by the higher education institutions and the Resource and Implementation Group on Nurse and Midwife Prescribing as follows:

- registration as nurse or midwife on the live register of An Bord Altranais
- minimum of 3 years post-registration clinical experience (within the past 5 years with at least one year in the area in which prescribing is proposed)
- possession of competencies recognised at level 8 of the National Qualifications Authority Ireland framework
- demonstration of continuous professional development and ability to study at level 8
- support from employer to undertake programme
- nomination and confirmation of a designated medical practitioner mentor.

It is envisaged that similar prescribing education programmes will be developed and introduced at other third-level education institutions and in the future may be incorporated into existing postgraduate nursing and midwifery education frameworks.

Evidence Supporting Nurse and Midwife Prescribing

National Evidence

In their respective nationwide consultations, both the Commission on Nursing (Government of Ireland 1998) and An Bord Altranais (An Bord Altranais, 2000) identified that nurses and midwives believed that the extent of their patient care was restricted owing to the absence of prescriptive authority. This finding was repeated in the National Council's research into the future development of nursing and midwifery in Ireland and the extent and nature of nurse-/midwife-led services (National Council, May 2003 and April 2005 respectively). During the course of the original nurse and midwife prescribing project (2001-2005), the National Council and An Bord Altranais consulted widely with nurses and midwives of various grades and in diverse healthcare settings, and with other healthcare professionals and organisations. (An Bord Altranais and National Council, 2005). Data collected indicated that there was broad support for nurse and midwife prescribing and recognition of its benefits to patients/service users and services alike.

The numerous health strategy, health service reform and related documents that have been published in Ireland in the last decade have many strands and themes in common. The most striking of these is that as the health system re-organises new opportunities are created. The expansion of the scope of nursing and midwifery practice in some areas, particularly in the context of enhanced patient care leading to improved population health, has been supported in a number of these documents including:

- the *European Working Time Directive No 93/104/EC*, with its intended aim of reducing non-consultant hospital doctors' working hours
- *Report of the National Task Force on Medical Staffing* (Department of Health and Children 2003)
- *Effective Utilisation of Professional Skills of Nurses and Midwives: Report of the Working Group*, (Department of Health and Children 2001), which outlines the increasing mix of front-line healthcare workers
- the enhancement of primary care services in *Primary Care – A New Direction* (Department of Health and Children 2001)
- and the *Transformation Programme 2007-2010* (Health Service Executive 2006).

International Evidence

The National Council and An Bord Altranais have identified that nurse (and midwife) prescribing practice has already been developed in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, New Zealand, Australia and Sweden (An Bord Altranais and National Council, June 2005). Typically, nurse and midwife prescriptive authority has developed abroad in response to specific situations where patients' care and safety may have been compromised by restrictions on nurses and midwives' scope of practice. In each of the countries named above, the safety of patients has been of paramount importance when considering the introduction of nurse and midwife prescribing. Governmental healthcare, and nursing and midwifery organisations have developed competency frameworks for nurses and midwives in tandem with rigorous quality assurance programmes to ensure safe professional practice in relation to prescribing.

Thirty years of internationally accumulated quantitative and qualitative research into various aspects of nurse and midwife prescribing shows that:

- nurses and midwives are safe prescribers
- patients view nurse and midwife prescribers favourably because of attributes such as responsiveness and empathy, and their ability to communicate effectively and provide adequate information about a patient's condition and treatment
- nurse and midwife prescribing is cost- and time-effective for service providers
- rates of patients' compliance with nurse and midwife prescriptions are high
- nurses and midwives take detailed medical histories before making a decision about an intervention and may be more likely to prescribe a non-pharmacological intervention.

These international findings were endorsed by the National Council and An Bord Altranais in the *Review of Nurses and Midwives in the Prescribing and Administration of Medicinal Products* (An Bord Altranais and National Council, 2005). While there was no prescriptive authority in Ireland at the time that the original prescribing project was taking place, the participants in the project's component activities clearly recognised the benefits of nurse and midwife prescribing.

Case study: The Impact of a Diabetes Specialist Nurse Prescriber

A good example of the value of a nurse or midwife with prescriptive authority has been outlined in an article by Courtenay, Carey, James, Hill and Roland (2007) evaluating the impact of diabetes specialist nurse prescriber at a hospital in the United Kingdom (UK).

Patients with diabetes occupy approximately 10 per cent of hospital in-patient beds in the UK and are likely to be admitted to hospital twice as often and stay twice as long as people without diabetes. A lack of understanding about diabetes amongst hospital staff, inappropriate amounts and timing of meals, discharge delays and errors in the administration of insulin are shortfalls identified at a national level in the UK's diabetes service. Interventions from diabetes specialist nurses have been found to address these issues and provide an emphasis on patient education, support advice, and medicines management.

A quasi-experiment was designed to compare standard in-patient care for adults with diabetes (n=452), both before and after an intervention led by a diabetes nurse specialist (n=187 and 265 respectively). The experiment compared medication errors, length of stay, patients' reported ability to manage their diabetes during their stay, problems obtaining insulin injection/pen devices, and problems obtaining food at appropriate times. The intervention comprised the following care and advice from the diabetes specialist nurse: an initial assessment, review of patients' medicines regimens, individual education sessions, on-going review of patients' medicines regimens, and nurse supplementary prescribing in specified situations.

Results showed that the diabetes nurse specialist made significantly fewer medication errors than other practitioners; the length of stay of patients in the intervention group was significantly shorter than that of patients in the pre-intervention group; more patients in the intervention group reported that they were able to manage their diabetes during their hospital stay; and fewer patients in the intervention group reported problems obtaining insulin injection/pen devices and food at appropriate times.

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Appendix One - Resources for Nurse and Midwife Prescribing

Ireland

An Bord Altranais

An Bord Altranais's website (www.nursingboard.ie) provides information on developments in the nurse and midwife prescribing initiative and also makes available quick access to medication management issues discussed in past issues of the An Bord Altranais Newsletter. Follow the links to Publications/ABA Guidelines to download documents of interest e.g. Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on Medication Management, July 2007; Report of the Review of Nurses and Midwives in the Prescribing and Administration of Medicinal Products (full and summary reports), June 2005, and the Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework, April 2000) to read more about An Bord Altranais role in this area.

An Bord Altranais have published the following documents integral to the implementation of nurse and midwife prescribing:

- *Requirements and Standards for Education Programmes for Nurses and Midwives with Prescriptive Authority;*
- *Decision Making Framework for Nurse and Midwife prescribing;*
- *Practice Standards for Nurses and Midwives with Prescriptive Authority; and*
- *Collaborative Practice Agreement for Nurses and Midwives with Prescriptive Authority.*

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Department of Health and Children

Press releases by the Minister for Health and Children and by the Minister for State at the Department of Health and Children can be downloaded from the website (www.dohc.ie), as can the health strategy and health service reform programme documents and reports on nursing and midwifery.

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Health Service Executive

Information about the nurse and midwife prescribing initiative can be found on the website of the Health Service Executive – www.hse.ie (follow the link to *Nurse & Midwife Prescribing*). At present information is available on the prescribing education programme and the Resource and Implementation Group.

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National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery

Information about the role of the National Council in the review of nurse and midwife prescribing from 2001 can be found on website – www.ncnm.ie (follow the links to *Rx Nurse and Midwife Prescribing*). The *Final Report* on the original nurse and midwife prescribing project can be downloaded from the website (follow the link to *Publications/National Council publications*). Updates on the nurse and midwife prescribing initiative can be found in the *NCNM Quarterly Review*.

Resources for Nurse and Midwife Prescribing

International

Nurse Prescribing is a monthly British journal launched in 2003 and targeting nurses who have been granted prescribing rights, whether from a limited formulary or as supplementary or independent prescribers. Log on to www.nurseprescribing.com for further information.

Improving Patients' Access to Medicines: A Guide to Implementing Nurse and Pharmacist Independent Prescribing within the NHS in England (April 2006) can be downloaded from website of the UK Department of Health (www.doh.gov.uk). Follow the link to *Publications* or type *nurse prescribing* into the *Search this site box*.

The website of the National Prescribing Centre was formed in April 1996 by the Department of Health in the UK to promote and support high-quality, cost-effective prescribing and medicines management across the NHS, to help improve patient care and service delivery. Numerous resources are available on its website (www.medman.nhs.uk): non-medical prescribing, new medicines, medicines management, training and development, therapeutic reference sheets, etc.

Guiding Principles for Medication Management in the Community (Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council, June 2006) is available to download from the website of the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing (www.health.gov.au). Type the title of the document into *Enter keyword box*.

Guide to Good Prescribing: A Practical Manual (de Vries, et al, 1994; reprinted 1998 and 2000) is a useful resource prepared by the World Health Organisation's Action Programme on Essential Drugs. Using simple language, it provides step-by-step guidance to the process of rational prescribing and aims to promote effective prescribing habits. Type the following URL into the address bar: whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1994/WHO_DAP_94.11.pdf

Published by the International Council of Nurses, *Implementing Nurse Prescribing: An Updated Review of Current Practice Internationally* (Buchan and Calman, 2004) examines the implications of nurse prescribing, primarily from the perspective of national nursing associations. The paper draws from a literature review of consultation with key informants on nurse prescribing. It describes current practice and gives examples where new developments are being implemented. ISBN: 9295040015.

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