



HEALTH PROFESSIONS LICENSING AUTHORITY	
TITLE: Use of Alternative Healers and Carers in Nursing and Midwifery practice Position Statement	
EFFECTIVE DATE: May 2004	REVIEW DATE: May 2005
BOARD: Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory	

Introduction

Alternative healers and carers are widely used throughout Australian society. This is, and should continue to be recognised and valued, where it does not do harm.

Alternative healers and carers include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Traditional/cultural healers: Ngankari's
- Spiritual healers: clergy, church workers, rabbi etc
- *Complementary Therapists: acupuncture, reflexology
- Volunteers: friends of patients, family, community organisation volunteers, Red Cross etc

* Refer to Board's Policy Statement for Use of Complementary Therapies in Nursing and Midwifery Practice.

The Board recognises that:

- (1) Various forms of healers such as traditional and cultural healers, spiritual healers, complementary therapists, friends, family and volunteers are and always have been, a part of and complementary to nursing and midwifery practice. This is and should continue to be recognised and valued.
- (2) The use of a range of alternative healers' approaches may enhance the health and well being of individuals.
- (3) Individuals have the right, wherever possible, to the health and healing care of their choice.

The following policy statements refer to those nurses and midwives who formally incorporate an alternative healer/carers into the holistic nursing and midwifery care of the patient and family.

The Board adopts the policy that:

Developed 1999
Re-endorsed May 2004

- (1) The practice of incorporating an alternative healer/carer must be supported by written policies and protocols endorsed by the employing facility.
- (2) The informed consent of the individual receiving the alternative healing care is essential.
- (3) Any practice of alternative healing/carers should be incorporated into the total care of the individual.
- (4) The treating medical practitioner must be informed of the use of the alternative healer/carer.
- (5) Any practice or interventions provided by an alternative healer/carer should be appropriately documented.
- (6) The practice of incorporating alternative healers/carers into holistic care of individuals should be supported by quality assurance activities.
- (7) The specific alternative healers/carers should as a minimum, do no harm but where possible, should be supported by evidence (scientific based) to indicate the healing or care is beneficial.

Acknowledgment: The Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory recognises the New South Wales Nurses Registration Board's policy on complementary therapies which served to inform this policy.