

NURSING STRATEGY FOR SOUTH AFRICA **2008**



CHOOSE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Foreword by the Minister of Health



It gives me great pleasure to launch this strategy. As a country we are experiencing serious challenges in nursing, particularly shortage and loss of skilled professional nurses in the public health sector, a perceived decline in the standards of nursing care and generally the need to further improve the quality of health care in the public health facilities. This is exacerbated by an increase in the burden of disease.

Our government in its early years in office adopted the primary health care approach to meet the health needs of our people. This shift in focus to primary health care placed new demands on the health professions particularly nursing. To be able to improve the health status of our people, we need nurses who are adequately trained to implement the basic package of health care, who are also able to rise up to the challenge of specialized nursing care necessitated by medical and technological advances of today. Given this background a need was identified to formulate a nursing strategy that will serve as a framework for bringing about nursing reforms, congruent to the health needs of the country, and in line with the prescripts of the National Health Act. The strategy fulfills the goals set out in the National Human Resources for Health Plan released in April 2006. This Strategy offers a comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges faced by the nursing profession, and our country as a result.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'M. Tshabalala-Msimang'.

Dr. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, MP
Minister of Health

Preface



The National Human Resources for Health Plan published in 2006 provided a basis for the development of the Nursing Strategy for South Africa. The development of the nursing strategy was listed as one of the priorities in the plan. The nursing strategy articulates the link between nursing practice, education and training, nursing leadership, nursing regulation, social positioning of nurses, resources and the national health system. This strategy was developed by members of the nursing profession in support of the department's efforts to reposition nursing.

The review of the nurses' remuneration and career pathing dispensation, which has brought much hope about the future of nursing, is in part implementation of the National Human Resources for Health Plan. The strengthening of the nursing profession will ensure increased access to the basic package of health services by our people, especially in rural and underserved communities and to ensure universal coverage.

It is hoped that the relevant partners in the nursing profession will assist in responding to this strategy and embracing its objectives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TD Mseleku'. The signature is stylized and cursive, written over a white background.

Mr. TD Mseleku
Director- General of Health

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Department of Health, I would like to express my gratitude to the National Human Resource Committee (NHRC), the national and provincial departments of health for their contributions towards the development of this document. In addition, partners from nursing associations and the private sector all made inputs to refine this document.

All members of the Human Resources in Health family are acknowledged for their team effort during the consultative workshops and meetings to ensure the successful development of the Nursing Strategy for South Africa. The department also wants to thank all stakeholders who participated through their comments and professional advice, which contributed to the shape of this document.

The role of leading the implementation is that of the profession itself, guided carefully by the mandates of the department and the ministry. The challenge in the coming period will be to operationalise the strategy and make it a living document with tangible outcomes. From the enthusiastic response from key partners in the profession, I am convinced that the goals of the strategy will be realized.

Dr. Percy Mahlathi
Deputy Director-General: Human Resources

Definitions:

1. "Nursing" means a caring profession practised by a person registered with the South African Nursing Council, which supports, cares for and treats a health care user to achieve or maintain health and where this is not possible, cares for a health care user so that he or she lives in comfort and with dignity until death (Nursing Act 2005).
2. Student nurse – a person undergoing education or training in basic nursing.
3. Professional nurse – means a person who is qualified and competent to independently practise comprehensive nursing in the manner and to the level prescribed and who is capable of assuming responsibility and accountability for such practice.
4. Staff nurse – is a person educated to practise basic nursing in the manner and to the level prescribed under section 31 (1) (c) of the Nursing Act.
5. Auxiliary nurse or an Auxiliary midwife – is a person educated to provide elementary nursing care in the manner and to the level prescribed under section 31 (1) (d) and (e) respectively.

Abbreviations:

CBO: Community Based Organisation

CPD: Continuing Professional Development

ETQA: Education and Training Quality Assurer

HRH: Human Resource for Health

NEI: Nursing Educational Institutions

NHC: National Health Council (Forum of Minister and Health Member of Executive Councils in the Provinces)

NHRC: National Human Resource Committee

NHRIS: National Human Resources Information System

NQF: National Qualifications Framework

RPL: Recognition of Prior Learning

SANC: South African Nursing Council

SAQA: South African Qualifications Authority

SGB: Standards Generating Body

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Nursing in South Africa is facing a serious crisis. This is a concerning view expressed loudly by the nursing profession across the country citing the increasing loss of experienced nursing professionals from the public health sector as evidence also of the serious challenges the health system faces. These problems are shared with the private health sector too. A number of surveys and research papers on nursing have pointed to a variety of reasons for the worrying state of affairs in nursing with low remuneration and poor or deteriorating working conditions topping the list. This has to a large extent manifested in the reported decline in the standards of nursing care and generally the quality of health care in the public health facilities. These challenges are however not limited to nursing care.

The National Human Resources for Health Planning Framework¹ has been pivotal in teasing out HRH challenges facing the health care system in general and in particular the health care professions. In teasing out the issues affecting health professionals when drafting this strategic framework, the nursing profession was used as an example to illustrate the effects of the challenges on Human Resources for Health in South Africa. Furthermore, the National HRH Planning Framework defines a number of strategic focal areas and identifies these as key in improving the country's Human Resources for Health.

The planning framework concludes by suggesting a guideline or framework for use by the various stakeholders in developing their HRH operational plans. Development of a strategy for the nursing profession is one of priority areas listed in the plan. The process of developing this strategy commenced with a departmental workshop held on 9th and 10th March 2006. The purpose of that workshop was to develop a broad framework within which the nursing strategy would be developed. This was done under the auspices of the National Human Resource Committee (NHRC), a subcommittee reporting to the Technical Advisory Committee of the National Health Committee (NHC).

Participants in the workshop were therefore drawn from the national and provincial Departments of Health and selected key informants. The workshop drew and considered a variety of factors that were to inform the framework. These factors related to *nursing education, training, practice, utilisation of services, resources, professionalism, image of nursing* in South Africa. At a subsequent meeting of the NHRC a team was set up to draft a strategy for nursing. This team was comprised of departmental officials who are either directly responsible for nursing services in the provinces or interact with partners in the nursing field on matters pertaining to some of the areas mentioned above. The team ended up comprised of officials whose base professional training was in nursing. Several drafts have been developed and revised so that the final strategy can be used as a framework for driving reform and improvements in the nursing profession in South Africa.

1. INTRODUCTION

The nursing strategy is a critical part of addressing the serious challenges faced by nursing. It is proposed that it should be adopted as the basis for, and a blueprint for the strengthening of nursing as a profession in this country.

Nursing is widely acknowledged nationally and internationally as an essential component of health care delivery systems. Although there are more than 196 914 nurses that are eligible to practice nursing in South Africa the challenge facing the health care system is that the total number of nurses are not nearly sufficient to address the health care demands facing the South African health care system. South Africa, like other countries internationally, has felt the impact of the global shortage of nurses. It is therefore imperative that a country solution is developed to address the challenges of maintaining an adequate nursing workforce.

The transformation of the health care system progressed at a rapid rate since 1994 and health professionals were required to respond and keep up with the transformation process. The transformation of the regulation and practice of the health professions was not as rapid as the transformation of the health care system. The nursing strategy is aimed at addressing the gaps in the transformation and also at introducing significant improvements in the practice of nursing.

The Nursing Act No 33 of 2005 creates the legislative framework for the review of the scope of practice for the different categories of nurses to ensure that the practice of nurses in South Africa is aligned to the needs of the health care system. New qualifications that are based on the revised scope of practice have been reviewed to ensure that nurses are appropriately qualified to practice in accordance with the new scopes of practice and together the revised scope of practice and the new qualifications create a framework for nursing practice for the different categories of nurses in South Africa.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE NURSING STRATEGY

This strategy is aimed at addressing as a matter of urgency the challenges faced by nursing in South Africa. It is a document that, in a nutshell *articulates how nursing education and training, practice, resources, social positioning, regulation and leadership are planned and linked together with prescripts of professionalism to support of the nation's health system.*

3. THE GOAL OF THE NURSING STRATEGY

The goal of the Nursing Strategy for South Africa is therefore to achieve and maintain an adequate supply of nursing professionals who are appropriately educated, distributed and deployed to meet the health needs of all South Africans.

4. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NURSING STRATEGY

The Nursing Strategy for South Africa is based upon the principles of the Human Resources For Health Planning Framework as mandated by the National Health Act No. 61 of 2003. The following principles are central to this strategy.

- Good quality education and training
- Provision of an enabling environment for nursing
- Accessibility of nursing to all South Africans
- Good leadership in all aspects of nursing
- Better image and social positioning of nursing
- Maintain a high standard and quality of nursing practice
- Promote and maintain a high standard of nursing education
- Enhance and maintain professionalism amongst members of the nursing profession
- Ensure that there is strong leadership that provides appropriate guidance and direction to nurses

- Have sufficient number and appropriate categories of nurses required for the health care system
- Ensure that adequate resources and support systems are available for nursing services
- Ensure that the environment within health care settings where nursing services are rendered are conducive for efficient nursing care

5. PERSPECTIVES ON NURSING

The nursing profession comprises the largest category of health professionals that provide health care within the South African Health Care system (196 914 eligible to practise nursing) and due to the prominence of nurses in the health care delivery system it warrants a specific focus on a strategy for nursing (SANC: 2006). Nurses consequently play a unique role in providing and maintaining the health care system. That is probably the single most important reason why the South African public is seriously concerned about the plight of the nursing profession. These professionals carry the responsibility of bringing health services to all communities through the spectrum of health care delivery mechanisms from primary health care up to tertiary levels of health care. Any shortage experienced in this professional cadre negatively impacts on access and the quality of care that is enshrined in the country's constitution.

Similar to other countries worldwide, *'the issues associated with the nursing workforce are particularly complex and dynamic and involve multiple stakeholders, including governments, employers, professional associations, unions, and educators. Therefore, addressing these issues requires the full involvement and cooperation of all of these organizations. While each stakeholder supports the goal of a stable and competent supply of nurses, their different roles and responsibilities lead to different perspectives on how to best achieve this. The supply of nurses, their quality and competency, and their retention in jobs and in the profession are all dependent upon many different factors, including educational capacity, clinical training opportunities, entry-to-practice standards, support for new entrants in the workplace, efficient deployment patterns, continuing education opportunities, meaningful careers and supportive work environments. These factors are also largely dependent upon each other. These perspectives illustrate the complexity of these issues and the need for improvements in coordination and cooperative action'* (Health Canada, 2000)^b. South Africa is faced with the same challenges, which necessitated the approach employed in developing this strategy.

There are many documented challenges that nursing is faced with ranging from education, training, practice, remuneration, image in society, migration and leadership to name a few. The focus of the strategy therefore has to be broad enough to address these challenges leveraging on all possible networks. In addressing the challenges facing nursing as a profession, it is necessary to find solutions to the following challenges:

- How the nursing profession can leverage on the commitment expressed in various policies and legislation to improve the provision of nursing services
- How the nursing profession can find ways of embracing global influences in a manner that improves patient care
- How the image of the nursing profession can be restored
- How nursing can remain a profession that offers access to all South Africans particularly those from previously marginalized groups whilst lifting the 'bar' in terms of quality education and training

5.1 Nursing in a Changing Health System

The change in the mode of delivery of health services from a hospital centred approach to a primary health care approach required a modification in the practice of nursing and consequently a change in emphasis in the education and training of health professionals. This development has not left nursing unscathed as the profession is now re-examining the impact of a changing health system on nursing, mainly brought about by a number of factors e.g. the increasing burden of disease, increasing attrition in skilled and experienced health professionals and decline in the resource base for nursing. As a result, attention has for a long time been focused primarily on trying to hold ground against workforce attrition and deteriorating environment as opposed to a concerted focus on planning for future supply and anticipating future shortages.

The latter phenomenon is common to almost all health professions. The challenge of a dynamic health system context and profile has resulted in pressures, which have highlighted the need for specific attention to be paid to planning and managing the health workforce. Increasingly, and somewhat inevitably, organizations representing the interests of health professionals find themselves having to necessarily take the lead in creating and maintaining loci of information about different characteristics and dynamics in the workforce. The nursing workforce is no different and requires particular attention since it is the foundation of the national health system. Due to the pivotal position of nursing and the far-reaching impact that the nursing profession has experienced from the changes in the health care system, nursing is well placed to lead the way in the transformation processes of the health professions.



5.2 Nursing as a Career of Choice

For many decades nursing has been a career of choice for South Africans from all sectors of society. Historically nursing as a career was accessible to many previously disadvantaged school leavers who were attracted to the subsidized nursing education and training. However, more recently, the situation has changed. The availability of student positions in the public sector has declined and the availability of other career choices has diluted the number of new recruits into the nursing profession. Many within the profession point to deteriorating conditions as a reason for decline in the status and image of nursing. Nursing is not as regarded or perceived as worthwhile or lucrative by young people like it used to be. This is as a result of changes in the social positioning of nurses and teachers who used to be revered in communities as people of high social standing. In addition, expanding opportunities in the general labour market have resulted in an increase in the competing employment opportunities nationally and even internationally. This may be the biggest challenge that the profession has to do battle with and ensure that it works hard to restore its image and attract the best minds to its ranks.

It is clear that innovative strategies will be needed to develop nursing as a career of choice among young people. The work that has been done on how young people make career choices must be expanded to include those who are about to make career choices to gauge their motivation and perceptions. The nursing workforce also needs to be studied in depth so as to identify those factors, which would induce nurses to work in the public health sector especially, and in underserved areas in general.

5.3 Managing the Nursing Workforce

All nursing associations and unions report a deteriorating quality of work-life for nurses. Quality of work-life is widely believed to be one of the most important factors in recruitment and retention, thus having an impact on the current and the future supply of nurses. Quality of work-life is determined by many factors, many of which are interrelated. The diversity of the nursing workforce and of practice settings means that there is no single work-life issue to be addressed independently, but rather a constellation of issues each contributing in a different way to professional and personal job satisfaction. The range of issues includes appropriate workload, professional leadership and clinical support, adequate continuing professional education, career mobility and career ladders, flexible scheduling and deployment, professional respect, protection against injuries and diseases related to the work place, and good wages. Further, responsiveness and sensitivity to nursing professionals' concerns must be a key driver of nursing management capacity building throughout the health system.

5.4 International / global influences

While the impact of globalisation on the nursing services has not been scientifically quantified, the brain drain challenge and loss of highly skilled nurses needs no rigorous scientific quantification before remedies are put in place. Health professionals are generally in short supply worldwide, while international migration has grown in volume and has become an important social issue in many parts of the world. Trained human capital moves largely from less developed nations to most developed and affluent ones, with adverse implications for health services in the sending countries. In SA, nurses and medical doctors are the categories that emigrate in significant numbers and whose impact is felt beyond the emigrating numbers because of the highly developed skills base the country loses when they leave. The main factors influencing the migration of nurses are low remuneration, poor working conditions, shortages of supplies and equipment and poor working environments. In addition the mal-distribution of nurses between urban and rural areas is a serious issue of concern.

6. STRATEGIES FOR NURSING

In the Nursing Strategy for South Africa the six strategic focus areas are identified. Strategic objectives, activities, implementation partners and outputs for each strategic focus area have also been identified. The strategic focus areas are:

1. Nursing Practice
2. Nursing Education and Training
3. Nursing Leadership
4. Nursing Regulation
5. Social Positioning of Nursing
6. Resources for Nursing

These strategies are proposed with the understanding that further development and implementation of each strategy will require the unifying efforts of all stakeholders. In addition the primary or lead responsibility and the output measures for each strategic focus are identified. The cost implications of these strategies have to be considered by the national and provincial Departments of Health and stakeholders to identify potential funding sources and reflect on fiscal capacities, as these are critical in securing a stable nursing workforce for the future. These are the strategic focus areas that have to be supported by specific activities in terms of implementation.

7. DISCUSSION

Six strategic focus areas are discussed below. Strategic objectives, activities, implementation partners and outputs for each strategic focus area have been identified.

7.1 Nursing Practice

The following strategic objectives are important for provision of an enabling environment for nursing service, namely: establishment of an enabling legislative environment, improving the quality of nursing practice, improving the skills and competency levels of nurses, developing collaborative partners, developing nursing staff establishments responsive to service delivery needs and strengthening the role of nursing in health service delivery.

As part of the implementation of the nursing strategy, it will be critical to develop enabling policies in order to kick start the creation of appropriate career paths for nurses especially the clinical nursing specialists. In improving the quality of nursing practice it is important that critical nursing skills and competences should be identified and these be linked to scopes of practice.

The scope of practice provides the parameters within which nursing professionals function. In line with the numerous changes to health care delivery system in South Africa already alluded to earlier, the scope practice for nurses was required to ensure that the practice of nursing is responsive to the health care delivery needs. In this regard the SANC in 2004 revised the scope of practice of the current three categories of nurses and midwives, namely, registered nurses, registered midwife, enrolled nurses and enrolled nursing auxiliaries. In line with the Nursing Act No 33 of 2005, the three categories of nurses proposed in the revised scopes of practice were Professional Nurse, Professional Midwife, Staff Nurse and Auxiliary Nurse.

The revision of the scopes of practice took into consideration the current health care system, international best practice, national health care policies and the health care priorities facing South Africa together with the challenges currently facing nursing practice.

The implementation of the revised scope of practice now requires:

- 1 New regulations on the scope of practice
- 2 Regulations that prescribe minimum educational requirements
- 3 New educational qualifications that are aligned to the revised scope of practice

This strategy also aims to ensure that the revised scope of practice is successfully implemented so as to have a positive impact on the health care delivery system. Research into the relevance of theory to practice should be commissioned at regular intervals in order to guide nursing practice. Research activity in the nursing profession and among nursing educators and professionals will need special attention, as it is critical to the sustainability of the profession.

It is imperative that the public health sector identifies and works in collaboration with partners such as professional nursing organisations and the private health sector groups around issues of production, development and retention of nurses as part of the implementation of the nursing strategy. The development of national nursing staffing norms and standards and appropriate organisational systems will assist the nursing staff establishments that are responsive to service delivery needs and also strengthen the role of nursing in health service delivery. In achieving the above-mentioned strategic objectives the National and Provincial Departments of Health, SANC, Nursing Education Institutions (NEIs), Nursing Professional Associations, Private Sector and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) should strongly work in collaboration.

7.2 Education and Training

Nursing education and training plays an important role in the production of well-trained and properly groomed nurses. The following strategic objectives are important in realising the above-mentioned crucial role played by education and training:

- Improving the quality of nurse educators
- Recruitment and retention of nurse educators
- Harmonisation of education and training
- Integration of theoretical knowledge with practice
- Appropriate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Increasing the production of nurses and
- Promotion of continuing professional development.

The revised scopes of practice alluded to in the previous section require new educational qualifications and in this regard The SANC and South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) are in the process of finalising the new nursing qualifications. Initially the Standard Generating Body (SGB) for Nursing drafted educational qualifications in line with the current scopes of practice and submitted these to the SAQA. The SANC expressed concern about these qualifications, as the basic qualification for a registered nurse was a Bachelors Degree. The impact that this qualification would have had on the current providers is that only higher education institutions i.e. universities and universities of technology would have had the capacity to offer this qualification. This would have had a serious impact on the production of registered nurses as the bulk of the education and training of registered nurses are produced by nursing colleges, which are not recognised higher education institutions in their own right to award Degrees. This concern was highlighted to the SGB, the Department of Health and SAQA with the Department requesting that the qualifications are re-aligned with the revised scope of practice. This work is in progress.

The NEIs would have to align the curricula of the nursing programmes to comply with the requirements of the new qualifications alluded to above. In addition the gap in the education and training between the current categories of nurses and the new categories of nurses required to practice in accordance with the new scopes of practice will require special attention that will have to be jointly addressed by both the NEIs and the health service authorities. Support from the professional associations and the SANC is imperative for the successful implementation of the new scopes of practice and entry into the new category of nurses.

The success of the implementation of the new educational qualifications is dependent on the availability of sufficient suitably qualified nurse educators. For nursing education and training to succeed it is important that retention strategies be developed for nurse educators in the public sector in particular. These may take the form of career pathing and succession planning as well as development and implementation of a set of attractive conditions of service for nurse educators. The responsibility of improving the conditions of service for nurse educators lies with the employer (Department of Health and the Private Health Sector).

Harmonisation of education and training is essential and will be achieved by ensuring that nursing qualifications are commensurate with the relevant scopes of practice. As explained earlier the scopes of practice should be informed by service delivery needs and give effect to the integration of theoretical knowledge with practise to improve quality of nursing graduates. This requires that nurse educators are not only equipped academically but also in the clinical areas of the relevant nursing programmes. The review the existing curricula of all nursing programmes with priorities given to Midwifery, Psychiatry and Primary Health Care is critical and must be an ongoing activity to ensure long-lasting relevance. The SANC as an Education and Training Quality Assurer (ETQA) of nursing as well as accredited nursing education and training institutions should ensure that such reviews are undertaken regularly. The need to increase the production of nurses has been identified and amplified in the HRH planning framework.

To make sure that the learners succeed, the selection criteria for nurse training needs to be improved and support systems for candidates with potential developed to enable their success. In doing this, it is important that broader development and transformation goals are not ignored, and student support systems must be nuanced, geared to assistance, and ensure that students do succeed at all institutions.

The capacity of the accredited NEIs should be determined through regular national audits. Coupled with the audits, more clinical facilities should be subjected to SANC accreditation process so that more clinical facilities should be made available for clinical placement of learners as the supply of nursing professionals' needs to be expanded in the light of the shortages identified above. Preceptors must be made available to strengthen integration of theory and practice.

RPL is considered as an important mechanism for recognising work experience and on the job learning in South Africa. The implementation of RPL is a critical pre-condition for upgrading the qualifications of the existing midlevel workers in nursing or health related professions interested in nursing and it also assists in the creation of learning pathways towards nursing qualifications which can only augur well for the profession. However there is work underway to re-evaluate the current RPL system so that it serves to improve the standard and not be seen as adding challenges to a nurse training system that is meant to maintain good standards of nursing care. In this regard the capacity of existing educational institutions to implement RPL requires urgent attention so that there is formal recognition of those nurses that have acquired skills and knowledge in the health sector but need further education to achieve the levels required of registered nursing professionals. For those already practising, the development and implementation of effective, relevant and appropriate CPD is critical, provided it is well designed and assists participants in practical terms.

7.3 Nursing Leadership

A conscious decision should be taken to put in place leadership programmes for nurses including mentorship and coaching programmes, succession planning, carefully planned deployments to increase exposure to diverse leadership environments, recognition and reward for expertise and excellence. To enhance nursing management capacity for nurses it is important that appropriate training and development programmes for nurse managers be established. Organisational structures in health provision should be developed in such a way that nurse leadership is strategically positioned to play its rightful role in the health system. National and Provincial Departments of Health, SANC, NEIs and Professional Associations are responsible for making sure that leadership in nursing is developed, nurtured and enhanced. Nursing organisations have a leading role to play in ensuring the development of curricula for appropriate management and leadership interventions in the nursing profession.

7.4 Nursing Regulation

It is internationally recognized and acknowledged that the fundamental purpose of regulating health professionals is to ensure that:

- a. They serve the public appropriately, and
- b. The public is reasonably protected

South Africa subscribes to this understanding and believes that it is only through tight regulation that the public interest can best be served. However such regulation has to be in keeping with the constitution of the country and serve to promote the quest for a common destiny by all South Africans with health professionals playing a major role. The SANC has been delegated the authority to administer regulatory and licensing responsibilities by means of the Nursing Act No 33 of 2005.

Nursing has always been regulated in this manner but this has to be strengthened by ensuring that there is regular re-evaluation of the South African nursing regulatory framework that seeks to strengthen all aspects of nursing. A strong but fair regulatory framework for nursing must always underpin the five other principles identified in this policy strategy. This will promote and ensure uniform standards that must be applied across the country. Ultimately, the way nursing is regulated must show in the quality of clinical nursing practice and nursing leadership in all its forms. This is key to re-establishing and maintaining the public's high level of trust in the nursing profession.

The strength and quality of nursing regulation depends on nurses regulating nursing. Only the nursing profession itself has the unique knowledge necessary to set and enforce standards of nursing practice. Nursing is bound by the ethical values of the profession that require nurses to base their practice on relevant and current knowledge, and to show respect for the well-being, dignity and autonomy of persons receiving care. These values promote safe, ethical and competent nursing care. It is therefore the SANC's responsibility to ensure that there are clear practice rules and guidelines set for the profession and responsibility of members of the profession to practice in accordance with these guidelines.

Nursing regulation must therefore evolve to meet the changing health care needs of the South African public. A developmental approach in the maintenance of nursing standards and processes is essential. Scopes of practice evolve and often overlap with other health professions in trying to respond to changing health care needs of the public. Likewise, regulation approaches evolve to meet the challenges and opportunities of technological advancements. It is important that regulators, policy makers, educators and the nursing profession itself know how important nursing regulation is to the country's health system. Advancing from keeping the register of professionals to ensuring adherence to professional values through education and practice is a major responsibility to participation in nursing workforce planning and development. This means constant benchmarking internally (within nursing), externally (with other professional groups) and internationally (with nursing regulators). Self-regulation by the health professions has to undergo detailed scrutiny

with exploration of nursing practices, policies and history of self-regulation prominent in that exercise. There is a clear reason why nursing regulation has to be strengthened and alternative models to improve it investigated and tested if found reasonable.

7.5 Social Positioning of Nursing

The nursing profession should be promoted as a career of choice for qualifying school leavers including individuals wanting to make a career change as well as health related midlevel workers without compromising on the high standards of nursing care. The conditions of service for nurses must be improved including introduction of professional wellness and personal growth programmes. Provision of good accommodation for nurse learners as well as nurses working in underserved areas will promote nursing as a career of choice. The image of nursing needs to be restored by making sure that professionalism is upheld at all times. It is important that nurses understand the thrust of the country in order to support policy decisions taken regarding the nursing profession. Examples of those are among others, introduction of community service for nurses, definition of nursing in the SA context, improving knowledge and acceptance of the role of professional associations and unions. The responsibility of proper positioning of nursing in a social context lies with the National and Provincial Health Departments, Private health sector, SANC, NEIs, Professional Associations and Unions.

7.6 Resources for Nursing

For nursing to improve, it is important that nursing be adequately resourced. In improving staffing, proper organisational investigations including work studies and appropriate staffing norms, should be conducted in order to have adequate nursing staff. In conducting these investigations, the impact of HIV and AIDS on staffing should be taken into consideration. Adequate funding based on health service needs will need to be provided in order that the nursing strategy is implemented fully.

It is the responsibility of the National and Provincial Departments of Health, Department of Education, SANC and NEIs to ensure that nursing is sustainably resourced. This will involve gathering information and data to make compelling cases for resourcing in the future, as well as considerable amount of time lobbying for resourcing in order to implement the strategy.

In addition, capacity will need to be developed in planning for the workforce in the medium to long term by the relevant stakeholders. This will necessarily involve carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities in order to assess the shorter-term impact of nursing improvement interventions. Clearly, the Departments of Health and Education as well as the nursing profession will need to develop and engage with issues relating to supply and demand projections for nursing professionals.

SPONSORS AND CHAMPIONS OF THE NURSING STRATEGY FOR SOUTH AFRICA

As a steward of the health care system, the government (through the National Department of Health, Provincial Departments of Health and National Department of Education) has a key role to play in ensuring the successful implementation of this strategy. Ensuring future supply of nurses requires close collaboration among all employers (public and private), nursing council, educators, nursing professional associations, and labour organisations. This approach will ensure success in determining the supply needs and ensuring that they are met.

To ensure a measure of success, the Department of Health remains a sponsor of this strategy with the nursing profession, through the SANC taking the role of championing it. This effectively catapults the nursing profession into taking responsibility for marketing itself to all stakeholders and society.

IMPLEMENTATION ASPECTS OF THE NURSING STRATEGY FOR SOUTH AFRICA

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
1. NURSING PRACTICE	1.1 Establish an enabling legislative environment	1.1.1 Review, develop and align all legislative instruments impacting on nursing practice	National and Provincial Departments of Health SANC	Implementable policies in place
		1.1.2 Create a regulatory framework for the establishment of a public nursing agency to address resource requirements for public health services		Legislation aligned to nursing practice in place
		1.1.3 Create adaptable policies for nursing practice		Policy on Public nursing agency in place
	1.2 Improve quality of nursing practice / promote & assure quality of care		1.2.1 Implement the reviewed scopes of practice in line with education and training	Nursing Education Institutions, SANC, National and Provincial Departments of Health Private Sector
1.2.2 Develop scopes of practice for advanced nursing practice			Evidence based practice	
1.2.3 Link theory and research to practice			Operational plan in line with service delivery needs and resources	
1.2.4 Develop nursing service operational plans in line with quality service delivery needs and resources				

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objectives/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
1. NURSING PRACTICE	1.3 Improve the skills and competency levels of nurses in accordance with the competency framework and revised scope of practice.	1.3.1 Conduct a skills audit of all nursing personnel in terms of new scope of practice and competency requirements 1.3.2 Upgrade skills of nursing personnel to comply with new competency requirements 1.3.3 Provide career development programmes in accordance with health service delivery needs	Provincial Departments of Health Private Sector SANC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Competency assessment system in place · Skills Plan in place · Skills development programmes in place · CPD activities identified and aligned to revised scope of practice
	1.4 Develop collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders	1.4.1 Identify stakeholders and their roles to participate in production, placement and retention strategy for nurses	Private Sector, Training Providers, NGO, CBO, NPO National Department of Health Provincial Departments of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of Nursing strategy for South Africa - Sustained partnership

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
1. NURSING PRACTICE	1.5 Develop nursing staff establishments that are responsive to service delivery needs	1.5.1 Develop an approach to nursing staffing norms and standards based on SA context 1.5.2 Achieve a better balance among the different health professionals and support services based on revised staffing norms and standards 1.5.3 Create appropriate career paths 1.5.4 Develop realistic, sustainable and implement retention strategies 1.5.5 Develop & implement flexible staffing structures aligned to the scope of practice	National & Provincial Departments of Health Private Sector: Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Nursing staffing norms and standards in accordance with service needs in place · Career paths for all categories in place especially clinical specialities · Retention strategy implemented
	1.6 Strengthen role of nursing in health service delivery	1.6.1 Position nursing strategically at provincial, national and international levels 1.6.2 Ensure better and improved quality of supervision 1.6.3 Build quality nursing teams 1.6.4 Upgrade current enrolled and registered nurses in line with new scopes of practice 1.6.5 Quality Assurance systems for monitoring and evaluation of nursing practice 1.6.6 Establish provincial and national forums for sharing best practices in nursing	National & Provincial Departments of Health, SANC	Organizational systems reviewed and/or established

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
2. EDUCATION & TRAINING	2.1 Improve quality of nurse educators	2.1.1 Review conditions of service for Nurse educators through attractive, adaptable / implementable conditions of service. 2.1.2 Review and implement the requisite upgraded qualifications for nurse educators required for providing education and training	Departments of Health	Improved conditions of service All nurse educators are appropriately qualified and skilled
	2.2 Ensure harmonisation of education & training	2.2.1 Ensure qualifications are commensurate with scopes of practice - Re-activate nursing SGB i.r.o the new Scope of Practice - Link training with changing service delivery needs 2.2.2 Align nursing education to legislative requirements 2.2.3 Finalise new qualifications in line with revised scope of practice	SANC & NEI	Nursing SGB reactivated Training linked with service delivery needs Nursing Education is aligned to legislative requirements

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
2. EDUCATION & TRAINING	2.3 Integrate practice & theoretical knowledge	2.3.1 Strengthen collaboration with NEI and service providers so as to provide education and training. 2.3.2 Provide capacity for mentorship and preceptors programmes 2.3.3 Ensure qualifications are aligned to health service delivery needs	SANC, NEI Department of Health SANC	Proper integration of practice and theoretical knowledge
	2.4 Increase production of nursing professionals	2.4.1 Identify and accredit health facilities for clinical education and training to increase the capacity to accommodate the increased production requirements 2.4.2 Audit and increase the capacity of nursing colleges and training courses 2.4.3 Develop a recruitment and selection strategy for young nurses	SANC Provincial Departments of Health	Implementable plan in place Audit report

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
2. EDUCATION & TRAINING	2.5 Skills improvement	2.5.1 Identify, develop and strengthen CPD activities 2.5.2 Align CPD to clinical outcomes	SANC, NEI, Departments of Health	CPD activities identified and aligned
	2.6 Recruitment & retention of nurse educators	2.6.1 Develop retention strategies 2.2.2 Career pathing and succession planning	Departments of Health	Retention strategies

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
2. EDUCATION & TRAINING	2.7 Improve quality of nursing education	2.7.1 Develop quality management systems at nursing education institutions	SANC Nursing Education institutions All service providers for quality of nursing practice	Quality management systems in place at NEI Skills and resource audits conducted Improved quality of nursing education
		2.7.2 Audit quality of nursing education		
		2.7.3 Review and audit capacity and skills of nurse educators		
		2.7.4 Improve capacity of nursing education institutions and nurse educators to provide quality nursing education		
		2.7.5 Facilitate the registration of nursing education institutions as FET and HET institutions depending on fulfillment of criteria for registration		
		2.7.6 Review the role of Auxiliary nurses within the health care system		
2.8 Ensure an implementation strategy for RPL of Nurses	2.8.1 Establish RPL assessment centres in provinces	Department of Health Education Institutions SANC	RPL assessments centres RPL assessments conducted	
	2.8.2 Implement RPL in all provinces			

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
2. EDUCATION & TRAINING	2.9 Promote professional development for nurses	2.9.1 Improve the selection criteria for nurse training 2.9.2 Conduct pre-selection interviews for prospective nursing students 2.9.3 Conduct pre-selection medical assessment for prospective nursing students 2.9.4 Develop a plan to training and re-training of nurses in relation to reviewed scopes of practice	Department of Health Education Institutions SANC	Improved selection criteria Training and re-training Plan in place
	2.10 Improve research capacity of nurses	2.10.1 Conduct extensive training in research methodology 2.10.2 Facilitate nursing research amongst academic institutions and health facilities	Department of Health Education Institutions SANC	Research training programmes in place Increased research on nursing practice Increased research publications

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objectives/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
3. NURSING LEADERSHIP	3.1 Identify and positioning nursing leadership in all aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Registration · Practice · Education · Labour and at all levels of health care nationally and internationally	3.1.1 Develop organizational structures to appropriately positioning nurse leadership in all aspects and at all levels: national, provincial, local and institutional (public and private)	National and Provincial Departments of Health Regulatory bodies, higher education, DPSA, Professional Association/Labour, Public and Private Sector	Nursing strategically positioned in Organisational structures at all levels
	3.2. Enhance nursing leadership capacity to ensure good governance at all levels	3.2.1 Identify skills and competencies in all aspects at all levels in line with service delivery needs. 3.2.2 Develop and implement appropriate training programmes. 3.2.3 Develop and implement mentorship and coaching programmes. 3.2.4 Ensure effective succession planning. 3.2.5 Deploy nurses to situation that will enhance and develop their leadership capacity. 3.2.6 Succession plans and IDP's in clinical and administrative areas. 3.2.7 Recognise, utilise and reward expertise.	Provincial and National Departments of Health, regulatory bodies, higher education, DPSA Professional Association/Labour, Public and Private Sector	Audit of skills and competencies training and development plan Leadership development programmes developed

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
3. NURSING LEADERSHIP	3.3 Identify and nurture potential and emerging nurse leaders	<p>3.3.1 Encourage all nurse leaders (academic leaders) to positively influence neophytes into nursing and health (academic) debates on health systems.</p> <p>3.3.2 Establish the current numbers of emerging nurse leaders.</p> <p>3.3.3 Fast track potential leaders through use of IDP and succession plans.</p>	NEI, National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Regulatory bodies, DPSA, Professional Association/Labour.	Increased growth of leadership numbers of nurses involved in academic issues pertaining to health and nursing issues. (Need to be specific around numbers).
	3.4 Attract young nurses to nursing academia	3.4.1 Encourage academic leaders to positively influence neophytes into academic debates on health systems	NEI, National Department of Health	Growth in number of nurses involved in academic issues pertaining to health and nursing issues

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
<p>4. NURSING REGULATION</p>	<p>4.1 Implement the Nursing Act (Act 33 of 2005)</p>	<p>4.1.1 Regulate registration and licensing of nurses 4.1.2 Regulate the scope of practice 4.1.3 Regulating nursing education 4.1.4 Implement community service 4.1.5 Regulate ethical code and conduct of nurses 4.1.6 Regulate CPD for nurses 4.1.7 Establish a Nursing Council in terms of the Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · National & Provincial Departments of Health · SANC 	<p>Provisions of the Nursing Act implemented New Regulations aligned to the Act and health service requirements developed</p>
	<p>4.2 Ensure high standards of professional self-governance</p>	<p>4.2.1 Implement the corporate governance provisions of the Nursing Act 4.2.2 Arrange regular governance training session for council members 4.2.3 Perform periodic governance audits 4.2.4 Develop skills competencies for regulation leadership (<i>all councils</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · National Department of Health 	<p>Adherence to Corporate governance by the professional regulator</p>

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
4. NURSING REGULATION	4.3 Ensure quality service and protection of the public	<p>4.3.1 Redesign educational programs in accordance with new qualifications</p> <p>4.3.3 Promote and advance the value of public of profession's values in the</p> <p>4.3.4 Put in place mechanisms for the public to communicate freely with Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · NEI · Nursing Professional Association · Provincial Departments of Health · Department of Education · SANC 	Educational programmes, professional values responsive to public needs
	4.4 International benchmarking	<p>4.4.1 International benchmarking of strategic nursing management, nursing service delivery, standards, nursing education</p> <p>4.4.2 Benchmark laws and regulations governing nursing with international nursing regulatory frameworks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · National Department of Health · Nursing Professional Association · SANC 	<p>Policies compare with international best practice</p> <p>Nursing legal framework benchmarked</p>

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
5. SOCIAL POSITIONING	5.3. Improve social infrastructural support	5.3.1 Provide good accommodation facilities for nurses during training 5.3.2 Provide revised housing subsidies for accommodation of nurses 5.3.3 Develop Professional wellness and growth programmes	Provincial Departments of Health Private sector	Accommodation facilities in place Revised housing subsidies EAP programmes in place for nurses
	5.4 Promote nursing as career of choice	5.4.1 Market nursing as a career choice 5.4.2 Create attractive employment opportunities for nurses	Departments of Health NEIs Private Sector	Recruitment and Marketing strategy for nursing

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
6. RESOURCES FOR NURSING	6.1 Ensure safe nurse practice with appropriate nursing resources	6.1.1 Determine minimum staffing norms for safe practice	Provincial Departments of Health Private Sector	Guidelines on safe nursing practice
	6.2 Ensure sustainability of nursing	6.2.1 Adequate funding of nursing services 6.2.2 Attractive incentives and remuneration structures for nursing posts 6.2.3 Provide resources for education & training and continuing development programmes for nurses	DoH, DoE, Private Sector DoH, DoE, Nursing Education Institutions, Private Sector	Sustainability of nursing ensured

Strategic Focus Area	Strategic Objective/s	Activity	Implementation Partners	Output Measure/s
6. RESOURCES FOR NURSING	6.3 Quality assurance of clinical learning facilities	6.3.1 Assess the quality of learning facilities	Departments of Health (National & Provincial) SANC	Audit of clinical facilities Funding secured
		6.3.2 Enabling accreditation processes to take place internally and externally.		
		6.3.3 Provide funding for nursing research		
	6.4 Improve workforce planning	6.4.1 Work-study to address the needs of institutions with the illnesses of staff and HIV in mind to review the staff establishments of health institutions	Departments of Health (National & Provincial)	Work-study report Human resource plans projecting current and future nursing needs HR planning skills programme in place
		6.4.2 Develop human resource plans (Nursing) institutional, district, provincial and national level 6.4.3 Develop capacity for human resource planning		
6.5 Developing nursing academics / teachers	6.5.1 Develop a national health sciences academic programme	Department of Health NEI, National Department of Health, SANC, DoE	National health sciences academic programme in place	

(Endnotes)

- a See: Strategic Framework for the Human Resource for Health Plan; National Department of Health: 03 August 2005
- b See: Nursing Strategy for Canada; Health Canada, October 2000