

POSITION STATEMENT ON USE OF REGISTERED NURSES AND MIDWIVES AS ASSISTANT SURGEONS

1. PREAMBLE

The South African Nursing Council (SANC) is a statutory body established in terms of the Nursing Act, 2005 (Act no. 33 of 2005), to regulate the Nursing and Midwifery professions by establishing and maintaining the standards of nursing education and practice in the Republic of South Africa. SANC advocates on behalf of the public in matters concerning nursing by monitoring compliance with nursing and relevant regulatory frameworks.

2. BACKGROUND

In South Africa, Nurses and Midwives Practitioners are educated and trained to function at both entry level and higher level in specific fields of practice. For the purposes of nursing practice, existing nursing education provides for diplomas, degrees and post graduate diplomas that culminate in professional registration with the Nursing Council only. Therefore, when performing their nursing duties, nurses are guided by the Scope of Practice Regulations, Government Gazette R.2598 of 30 November 1984.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this position statement is to provide guidance in clinical practice and/or service on the use of Registered Nurses and Midwives as assistant surgeons.



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4. DEFINITION OF ASSISTANT SURGEON

"assistant surgeon " means a person who assist a surgeon, who is a medical practitioner to perform tasks that fall within the scope of practice of a medical practitioner.

5. SANC POSITION

- 5.1. Professional Nurses have in-depth knowledge and expertise in their specific areas of practice, but they are not, as part of their training, taught to perform surgery or act as assistant surgeons.
- 5.2. SANC does not support the use of Professional Nurses and Midwives as assistant surgeons as this is outside their Scope of Practice.
- 5.3. Professional Nurses and Midwives who fail to comply with the directive will be liable for acting beyond their Scope of Practice.

The Council approved the position statement at its meeting held on 29 June 2021.



S A MCHUNLI (MS)
REGISTRAR AND CEO
S A NURSING COUNCIL

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