



South African Nursing Council
Regulating nursing, advocating for the public

SANC POSITION STATEMENT ON ISSUING OF SICK NOTES BY PROFESSIONAL NURSE PRACTITIONERS

PREAMBLE

The South African Nursing Council (SANC) is mandated in terms of the Nursing Act, 2005 (Act No. 33 of 2005) to regulate the Nursing and Midwifery professions by establishing and maintaining nursing education, training as well as practice standards. The SANC is cognizant of the constant changing environment, legislation and relevant policies that affect and impact the nursing profession.

PURPOSE

This position statement aims to address inconsistent practices with the issuing of sick notes by registered nurse practitioners and provides standardization of practices in the provision of nursing services both in the public and in private practice. The position statement is informed by relevant policy provisions, consultation with relevant stakeholders and competencies for nurse specialists as well as benchmarking with best practice and will be subject to change in accordance with legislation applicable to nursing practice.

The SANC recognizes the provisions of section 23(2) of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act 75 of 1997) in respect of the requirements for valid medical (sick) certificates, which must be issued and signed by a Medical Practitioner or any other person who is certified to diagnose and treat patients. In the context of the SANC such a person is a Professional Nurse who holds an additional qualification in Clinical Nursing Science, Health Assessment, Treatment and Care and is registered as such by SANC. This nurse is capable of providing direct patient care for all types of illnesses and ailments, offering the first level of nursing care



Cecilia Makiwane Building,
602 Pretorius Street, Arcadia, Pretoria 0083
Private Bag X132, Pretoria 0001,
Republic of South Africa



Tel: 012 420 1000
Fax: 012 343 5400
SANC Fraud Hotline: 0800 20 12 16



website: www.sanc.co.za

that patients receive and is competent to independently render appropriate and skilled primary care service.

SANC POSITION

Professional Nurse Practitioners who possess an additional qualification in **Clinical Nursing Science, Health Assessment, Treatment and Care** and additional qualification in **Occupational Health Nursing** are deemed competent to assess, diagnose, treat and issue sick notes to patients.

The recommended period for Professional Nurse Practitioners to issue out a sick note is a maximum of two (2) days.

If the patient's condition does not improve, the patient should be referred to a Medical Practitioner or to the next level of care for further management.

Nurse Practitioners who fail to comply with the directive will be liable for acting beyond their scope of practice.

N.B Professional Nurses who do not possess the additional qualifications as stated above may only issue certificates of attendance.

To be valid, a sick note issued by the Nurse Practitioner must contain the following:

- The name, address, qualification and SANC Ref No. of the attending practitioner;
- The name of the patient;
- The date and time of the examination;
- Whether the certificate is being issued as a result of personal observations by the practitioner during an examination, or as the result of information received from the patient which is based on acceptable medical grounds;
- The exact period of recommended sick leave;
- The date of issuing of the sick note;



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- Identity of the practitioner who issued the certificate which shall be personally and originally signed by him or her next to his or her initials and surname in printed or block letters.

The position statement was approved by Council at its meeting on 29-30 July 2020.

Kind regards,



MS SA MGHUNU

REGISTRAR AND CEO

S A NURSING COUNCIL

DATE: 22-10-2020



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