Paramedic Practitioner Practice Framework
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Paramedic Practitioner Practice Framework

Introduction

Paramedicine has unashamedly and with great pride, evolved its roots from medicine, and evolved medicine into practice with or without modification. The title “Paramedic or Pmd” means para=alongside; medic=medicine. Paramedics already perform assessment, diagnosis and treatment. Paramedic practitioners build upon their undergraduate education and will undertake paramedic practitioner education delivered at Master and/or Doctorate levels. The scope of the paramedic practitioner role will involve the application of complex critical thinking, evidence based clinical decision making and providing advanced clinical care.

Paramedic practitioners will be able assess, order, and interpret investigations and imaging, diagnose, prescribe medication and undertake patient care. The key to the practice of a paramedic practitioner is to work independently or alongside our medical, nursing and allied health colleagues in a multidisciplined team.

Research, reflective practice, revaluation and innovation are integral to the paramedic practitioner model. These essential professional competencies will result in the improvement of health care delivery to our community, whether rural, urban or metropolitan.

The Paramedic Practitioner Practice Framework has been developed to describe a range of paramedic practitioner behaviours that are believed to improve the clinical practice, performance and, most importantly, patient care and outcome. The professional behaviours include a range of dot points that will guide practice, but in no manner are they intended to be exhaustive. Many other disciplines have similar frameworks written within their own context. ACPP has used the experience of our medical and health colleagues to develop our framework.

The Framework

The Australasian College of Paramedic Practitioners (ACPP) has divided this current framework into four elements;

- Element 1. Performs accurate clinical assessment and diagnosis
- Element 2. Develops care plans within a person-centred approach
- Element 3. Prescribes and provides appropriate patient care
- Element 4. Evaluates own practice, promotes the profession and strives to improve patient care

The framework is designed to be a reference point to a range of groups, including paramedic practitioners, health professionals, paramedicine, educational institutions, government, policy makers, employers, regulatory authorities and the community.
Element 1. Performs accurate clinical assessment and diagnosis

Professional Practice;

- Having an overarching understanding of established and evolving biological, clinical, epidemiological, social, and behavioural sciences.

- By listening, sharing and responding, the ability to communicate clearly, sensitively and effectively with patients, their family/carers, and other health professionals.

- Elicit an accurate, organised and problem-focused history, including family and social occupational and lifestyle features, from the patient, and other sources.

- Conducts a comprehensive, problem focused and thorough physical examination to obtain appropriate and accurate data that inform diagnosis and differential diagnosis.

- Apply aetiology, pathology, clinical features, natural history and prognosis of common and important presentations at all stages of life to interpret the findings of an assessment and examination to make a diagnosis.

- Evaluates the impact of comorbidities, including the effects of co-existing, multiple pathologies and prior treatments in the assessment of the person receiving care.

- Seriously considers the person’s expectations of clinical assessment, diagnosis and cost of health care.

- Critically evaluates the impact of social determinants on the person and population.

- Makes clinical judgements and decisions based on the available evidence. Identifies and justifies relevant management options alone or in conjunction with colleagues and/or other health professionals, according to level of training and experience.
Element 2. Develops care plans within a person-centred approach

Professional Practice;

- Integrates evidence from history taking, physical examination and diagnosis into planning and developing patient-centred care plans

- Develops a plan of care from the findings of the history and examination, including an initial diagnosis and relevant differential diagnosis. Discriminate between possible differential diagnoses, justify the decisions taken and describe the processes for evaluating these.

- Select and justify common investigations, with regard to the pathological basis of disease, utility, safety and cost effectiveness, and interpret their results. Select and justify common investigations, with regard to the pathological basis of disease, utility, safety and cost effectiveness, and interpret their results.

- Develops an individual plan of care and communicates this to appropriate members of the healthcare team and relevant health care agencies

- Explain the care plan and answer patients’ and family/carers’ questions, concerns and preferences, promote rapport, and ensure patients’ understanding of their problem(s). Involve patients and family/carers’ in decision making and planning their treatment, including communicating risk and benefits of management plan, enabling them to make fully informed choice.

- Respects the rights of the person to make informed decisions throughout their health/illness.

- Collaborates with other health professionals to review plans of care on a regular basis and to make and accept referrals as appropriate

- Advocates for improved access to health care, the health care system and policy decisions that affect health and quality of life.
Element 3. Prescribes and provides appropriate patient care

Professional Practice;

- Prescribes indicated non-pharmacological and pharmacological interventions only as required
- Has a comprehensive knowledge of pharmacology and pharmacokinetics.
- Prescribe medications safely, effectively and economically using objective evidence.
- Safely administers or orders therapeutic agents including medication, fluid, electrolytes, blood products and inhalational agents.
- Interprets and reviews the findings of screening and diagnostic investigations in an appropriate time frame.
- Discloses the details of adverse events to the person receiving care and other health professionals; mitigates harm, and reports adverse events to appropriate authorities.
- Respect the roles and expertise of other health care professionals, and demonstrate ability to learn and work effectively as a member of an inter-professional team or other professional group.
- Practices in accordance with federal, state and territorial legislation and professional regulation.
Element 4. Evaluates own practice, promotes the profession and strives to improve patient care

Professional Practice;

- Recognise the limits of own expertise and involve other professionals as needed to contribute to patient care and self-development.

- Self-evaluate their own professional practice and demonstrate lifelong learning behaviours.

- Works with health providers to mutually review evidence for expansion to paramedic practitioner service where it is believed that such an expansion will improve access to quality and cost-effective health care for specific populations.

- Thoughtfully critiques and collaboratively influences a range of health care policy and practice through leadership and active participation in the workplace and professional organisations.

- Accept responsibility to protect and advance the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and populations.

- Understand the factors that contribute to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or Māori, including history, spirituality and relationship to land, diversity of cultures and communities, epidemiology, social and political determinants of health and health experiences. Demonstrate effective and culturally competent communication and care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or Māori.

- Acts as an educator, coach and/or mentor to a range of health colleagues in the healthcare team.

- Learns how to provide clinical leadership in the design and evaluation of services for health promotion, health protection or the prevention of injury and/or illness.

- Advocates for self, paramedic practitioners, patients and disadvantaged.

- Keeps up to date with health advancements through ongoing professional and self-education.
Glossary

Attributes:

Are characteristics that underpin competent performance. Refer to the PBA Professional Capabilities for registered paramedics

Competence:

The combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and abilities that underpin effective and/or superior performance in a profession/occupational area.

Person/people:

In these Standards, person/people are used to refer to those individuals who have entered into a relationship with a Paramedic Practitioner. Person/people encompass patients, clients, consumers and families that fall within the Paramedic Practitioner scope and context of practice.

Prescribing:

is defined as the steps of information gathering, clinical decision making, communication and evaluation which results in the initiation, continuation or cessation of a medicine.

Professional Practice:

Key generic examples of competent performance. They are neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. They assist the assessor when using their professional judgement in assessing paramedic practitioner practice. They further assist curriculum development.

Scope of practice:

The scope of paramedicine practice is that in which paramedics are educated, competent to perform and permitted by law. The actual scope of practice of individual practitioners is influenced by the settings in which they practise, the health needs of people, the level of competence and confidence of the paramedic and the policy requirements of the service provider.
Reference


Australian Medical Council Limited (2012). Standards for Assessment and Accreditation of Primary Medical Programs by the Australian Medical Council 2012. Kington. AMC.


Paramedicine Board Australia (2018). Professional Capabilities for Registered Paramedics. Australian Health Professional Registration Authority (APHRA)

Reference of this document

For Further Information:

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Acknowledgements

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