



Certified Practicing Nutritionist – Primary Care Role Statement

- *Derived from mappings to the SA Health Allied Health Advanced Clinical Practice Framework*

A **Certified Practicing Nutritionist (CPN)** is a tertiary-qualified allied health professional delivering evidence-informed, person-centred nutritional interventions. Operating within primary care settings, CPNs play a critical role in supporting individual and population health outcomes by providing evidence-informed, person-centred, and culturally safe nutritional and lifestyle interventions.

The CPN's scope of practice spans direct clinical care, interprofessional collaboration, leadership, education, and research. The following role statement details the contributions of the CPN in primary care, based on CPN competency mappings to the *SA Health Allied Health Advanced Clinical Practice Framework*.

1. Advanced Clinical Practice

Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis

CPNs apply proficient health assessment and diagnostic reasoning to inform treatment. They determine the scope of the assessment and client needs, obtain informed consent, and assess for signs of disease or condition using structured methods. They correlate client history with assessment findings, apply critical evaluation to formulate a differential diagnosis, and identify condition stages and implications such as acute or chronic progression.

Client-Centred Care and Planning

Using a collaborative and person-centred approach, the CPN supports clients in identifying key information and addressing health concerns. CPNs design therapeutic nutritional strategies by integrating nutritional, anatomical, physiological, and pathophysiological knowledge and ensuring alignment with the client's goals, needs, and capacity for compliance. In partnership with clients, they review and revise care plans to ensure optimal health outcomes.

Therapeutic Nutrition Interventions

CPNs deliver evidence-based nutritional treatments (including meal planning, dietary modification and the personalised prescribing of therapeutic nutritional supplementation) to specific conditions and populations. Treatment plans may include dietary modification, nutritional supplementation, counselling, and health education. They document recommendations, assess treatment efficacy, and adjust strategies accordingly.

Managing Complexity

In cases of medical complexity or uncertainty, CPNs integrate multisystem assessments, identify risk factors, and liaise with other professionals. They apply critical thinking to evaluate contraindications, assess possible treatment reactions, and respond to adverse effects.

2. Clinical Leadership

Professional Autonomy and Accountability

CPNs practice independently within their scope, adhering to relevant legal and regulatory frameworks, maintaining confidentiality, and managing ethical issues in practice. They implement measures for accountability, participate in mentoring and performance review, and promote safe, high-quality care.

Team-Based Leadership and Supervision

The CPN supports workforce capability through coaching, mentoring, and performance support. They facilitate the development of professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes and contribute to team development through reflective feedback and consultation.

Service and Practice Development

By analysing their service performance and identifying areas for improvement, the CPN can contribute to operational strategies, diversity management, and clinic development aligned with emerging trends and health needs.

3. Education and Development

Self-Directed Learning and Reflective Practice

The CPN is committed to professional development, undertaking regular self-evaluation, planning realistic learning goals, and participating in ongoing training. They use emerging evidence and health system trends to evolve their practice.

Educating Clients and Colleagues

CPNs enhance client health literacy through tailored communication strategies, support shared decision-making, and adapt nutrition and health education to suit diverse populations. They educate colleagues and students through peer support, mentoring, and interprofessional learning.

4. Research and Evidence-Based Practice

Integration of Evidence into Practice

The CPN critically appraises current research, correlates findings with clinical cases, and implements evidence into individualised treatment strategies. They evaluate new methods and protocols and can contribute to innovation through nutrition service redesign.

Research Participation and Translation

Where appropriate, the CPN can participate in research initiatives, collects and analyses data, reports findings, and supports service evaluation in collaboration with broader health teams and academic networks.

5. Systems Thinking and Collaboration

Team-Based Practice and Referral

CPNs establish effective relationships with professionals across sectors, work collaboratively in shared care environments, and make timely and appropriate referrals. They communicate clearly and professionally in written and verbal formats and ensure client consent and appropriate confidentiality.

Service Navigation and Consumer Advocacy

CPNs maintain current knowledge of health systems, where relevant and appropriate they advise clients on available services, and can act as client advocates when navigating complex systems of care within a nutritional context.

6. Safety and Risk Management

Clinical Risk Management

The CPN identifies and manages potential clinical risks, implements infection control measures, and maintains hygiene and safety standards in their clinical practice. They respond appropriately to workplace incidents and emergencies, promote a safe work environment, and undertake WHS training.

7. Health Equity and Population Health

Public Health Nutrition and Health Promotion

CPNs can contribute to health equity by identifying emerging nutrition issues, applying health promotion strategies, and addressing the needs of vulnerable and diverse communities. They can promote sustainable, group-level nutrition outcomes through evidence-based education.

Conclusion

The Certified Practicing Nutritionist in Primary Care is a clinical practitioner who:

- Delivers individualised, evidence-based nutritional care.
- Contributes to multidisciplinary care teams.
- Leads professional development and service quality initiatives.
- Participates in research and evaluation.
- Promotes public health nutrition.

Through client centred, ethical, and evidence-informed practice, the CPN adds measurable value to Australia's primary care landscape.