

Practice Nurse Employment Toolkit

"This booklet has been developed with funds provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

It is published as a guide to assist General Practices in their decision making about the employment of nurses.

The information presented is based on data collected from a telephone survey of Practice Nurses conducted in February 2007. These are to be used as a guide only as employment laws and regulations vary from time to time and between the different States of Australia.

No liability can be accepted for any injury, loss or damage incurred by use of, or reliance on, this information."

Practice Nurse Employment Toolkit

The number of Nurses working within General Practice has increased. The value of their role, their support for GPs in providing an enhanced quality of patient care and, in turn, the increased financial benefits for General Practice are now well recognised.

If General Practice is to continue to recruit and retain nurses it is essential to be aware of the many factors which benefit both the profession of Nursing and the environment of General Practice, and in doing so, being able to compete with other health industries that already value the contribution of their nurses.

In 2007 research conducted by the Nursing in General Practice (NiGP) Qld Urban Workgroup revealed that there are a range of salary rates, employment conditions and roles undertaken by nurses to suit the needs of individual Practices. The research identified two roles for Practice Nursing. The Generalist Nurse who undertakes roles and responsibilities that complement their existing training and the Specialist or Advanced Nurse has undertaken further training to complement their generalist role.

As well as these identified roles, three employment options were also revealed, which can be applied to both nursing roles. These options include direct employment, Full time / Part time / Casual, Independently contracted or a combination of both, which appears to be increasingly popular.

In light of this information, this Practice Nurse Employment Tool Kit has been designed to assist practices understand the medical and financial benefits brought to the practice by the employment of a nurse. It highlights the methods of employment and provides information to assist the practice in their decision to employ a nurse.

The following '*Diagram 1 – New Nurse to Practice*', shows the steps that should be taken during the decision process and allows the practice to understand the benefits achievable through the employment of a Practice Nurse. If you are considering employing a nurse, it is hoped that this toolkit enhances your understanding of their role, shows how the position can be integrated within General Practice and highlights the benefits within the practice, the team and the patient population.

New Nurse to Practice

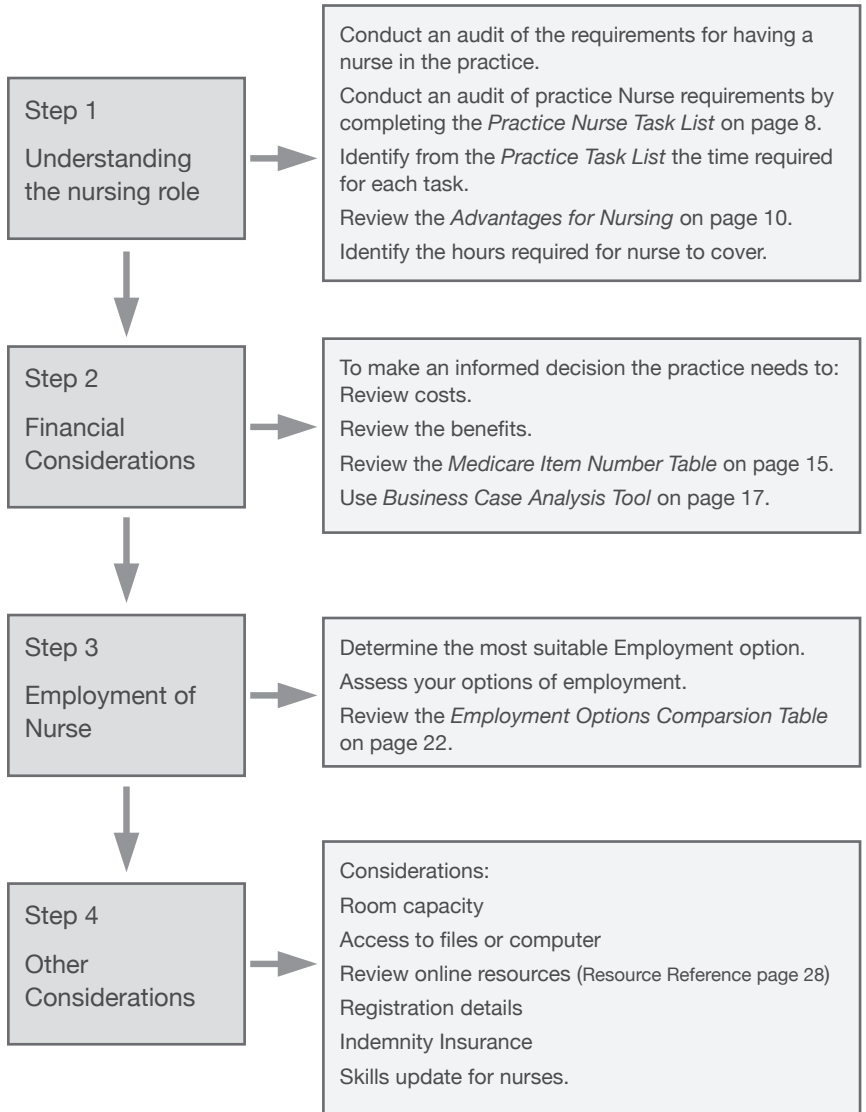


Diagram 1 – New Nurse to Practice

Step 1

Understanding the Nursing Role

Step 1. Understanding the Nursing Role

The *Practice Nurse Task List* details the roles that would normally be undertaken by a General Practice Nurse. With the use of the *Practice Nurse Task List*, practices should identify those tasks that would benefit from the employment of a nurse, review the individual tasks, identify who currently undertakes these tasks and consider the amount of time spent on each. Once completed, this tool will provide details of the time that can be saved by employing a nurse either by releasing time for the GPs to provide general consults or for other members of staff to fulfil their respective duties.

A secondary function the *Practice Nurse Task List* offers is that it can be utilised during the interview process. By using this tool with the prospective nurse the practice will be able to identify any training needs prior to employment. Further discussion regarding its use is available in Step 4 Other Considerations on page 27.

An example of a condensed version of the *Practice Nurse Task List* is on page 8. To complete an electronic version of the *Practice Nurse Task List*, please visit the General Practice Queensland website at the following link:

www.gpqld.com.au/page/Programs/Nursing_in_General_Practice_NiGP/NiGP_-_Qld_Divisions_Resources/

Although there is variation in the duties and tasks performed by the Practice Nurse, there does appear to be a number of general, but not necessarily independent, categories in which to group these specific duties. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Nursing Australia (May 2004) *General Practice Nursing in Australia* Report classified the role of the Practice Nurse into four main areas:

1. Clinical Care
2. Clinical Organisation
3. Practice Administration and
4. Integration.

Using these categories, *Table 1 – Advantages for Practice Nursing* has been designed to outline some of the advantages the GP, practice staff

and patients can experience from the employment of a nurse. Review this information and begin to consider the possibilities.

Practice Nurse Task List (Condensed)

This Practice Nurse Task List indicates those tasks that would normally be completed by a General Practice Nurse. The GP, Practice Manager, key Administrative staff and, where employed, the Practice Nurse should participate in the completion of this form. An electronic version of the task list is available at www.gpqld.com.au/page/Programs/Nursing_in_General_Practice_NiGP/NiGP_-_Qld_Divisions_Resources/

Identify who is currently undertaking each of the tasks listed and estimate the time to complete each.

Identify the tasks that require further training and review information provided in Step 4 of ToolKit.

Activity	GP	Practice Nurse	Admin Staff	Est. Time to Complete	Training Required
1. Clinical					
Triage					
Undertake ECGs					
Undertake urinalysis					
Undertake pregnancy tests					
Measure blood glucose					
Wound care					
Syringe ears					
Spirometry					
Immunisations					
Minor procedures					
Administration of medications					
Nebulisers					

Activity	GP	Practice Nurse	Admin Staff	Est. Time to Complete	Training Required
2. Administration					
Manage Recall and Reminder System					
Stock control					
Equipment maintenance					
Infection control					
Sterilisation					
Accreditation					
3. EPC/CDM					
Health Assessments (practice and/or home)					
45 - 49 Year Old Health Checks					
Care Planning (GPMPs and TCAs)					
Diabetes Annual Cycle of Care					
Home Medicine Reviews					
Patient Education and Counselling					
4. Advanced Primary Care					
Running a Women's Health Clinic					
Running a Diabetes Clinic					
Running an Asthma Clinic					
Running a Continence Clinic					
Running a Child Health Clinic					

Activity	GP	Practice Nurse	Admin Staff	Est. Time to Complete	Training Required
Running a Cardiovascular Clinic					
Cervical Screening					

Advantages for Nursing

Practice Nurse Role	Advantages for...		
Category	GP	Practice Staff	Patient
Clinical Care			
Treatment Room Triage Immunisation Minor Procedures Perform tests	Frees up time by performing treatment room activities Less interruptions to GP Treatment room preparation performed prior to minor procedures	Potential for less aggression at front desk. Have access to nurse to direct triage calls	Reduced wait times Patient anxiety reduced
Clinical Organisation			
Cold Chain Procedures ACIR Recording requirements Maintain S8 supply and register	Reduces administrative duties for GP Accreditation requirements are performed	Supports practice staff	High standards maintained

Practice Nurse Role	Advantages for...		
Category	GP	Practice Staff	Patient
Practice Administration			
Recall & Reminder systems Follow up on Patient referrals Results	Increased number of patients who have access to services the practice can provide Reduces paper flow for GP Risk Management related issues addressed	Supports practice staff Have access to nurse to direct any questions from patients	Results followed up in timely manner More access to services Can contact nurse with questions regarding referrals
Integration			
Maintain EPC related activities Liase with Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) Support Practice Staff	Reduction in paperwork Re-assurance patient referral followed up Health assessments are completed ready for GP component (15mins) Feedback from AHPs maintained	Supports practice staff	Assists patient access to services Increased knowledge More time with nurse Increased compliance Re-assurance of support

Table 1 – Advantages for Practice Nursing

Step 2

Financial

Considerations

Step 2. Financial Considerations

As the role of General Nurses within practices has changed so has the income they can generate for the practice. The employment of a nurse also provides more time for GPs to continue with their normal duties.

A number of Medicare item numbers exist which can be claimed alongside the normal GP consult Item numbers. Familiarise yourself with *Table 2 - Medicare Item Numbers* and consider the financial benefits their use can provide.

Review and complete the *Business Case Analysis Tool* within your practice using the calculation method provided, which shows examples of how these item numbers can be maximised and then compare this information with the employment costs of a nurse.

Medicare Item Numbers

Description	Item Number	Remuneration
Immunisation given by a Nurse on behalf of GP	10993	\$ 10.85
Cervical Smear and Preventative checks provided by Practice Nurse		
With Preventative Health Check	10994,10995	\$ 21.70
Without Preventative Health Check	10998, 10999	\$ 10.85
Wound Management by a Nurse on behalf of GP	10996	\$ 10.85
Chronic Disease – Monitoring and Support		
Checks on clinical progress		
Monitoring medication compliance	10997	\$ 10.85
Self management advice		
Collection of information to support GP review of care plans		

Description	Item Number	Remuneration
Other Medicare Item numbers that Practice Nurses can contribute to, PIPs & SIPs.		
45 Year old health Check	717	\$102.20
Health Assessments	700-706	
At Consulting Rooms	700	\$171.15
At Home	702	\$242.05
EPC Care Planning	721-731	
GP Management Plan (GPMP)	721	\$127.70
Team Care Arrangements (TCA)	723	\$101.15
Reviews of GPMPs and TCAs	725,727	\$63.85
Asthma Cycle of Care	2546	\$32.80
Diabetes Cycle of Care	2517	\$32.10
Childhood Immunisations		
Service Incentive Payment		\$18.50
Outcomes Payment (Per Whole Patient equivalent)		\$3.50
Cervical Smear from unscreened women	2501	\$32.80

Please note under the some categories Rural Practice varies on the item number and provides an additional cost. Variations apply dependant on Level of consult and review Item number descriptions.

Table 2 - Medicare Item Numbers

Business Case Analysis - Tool

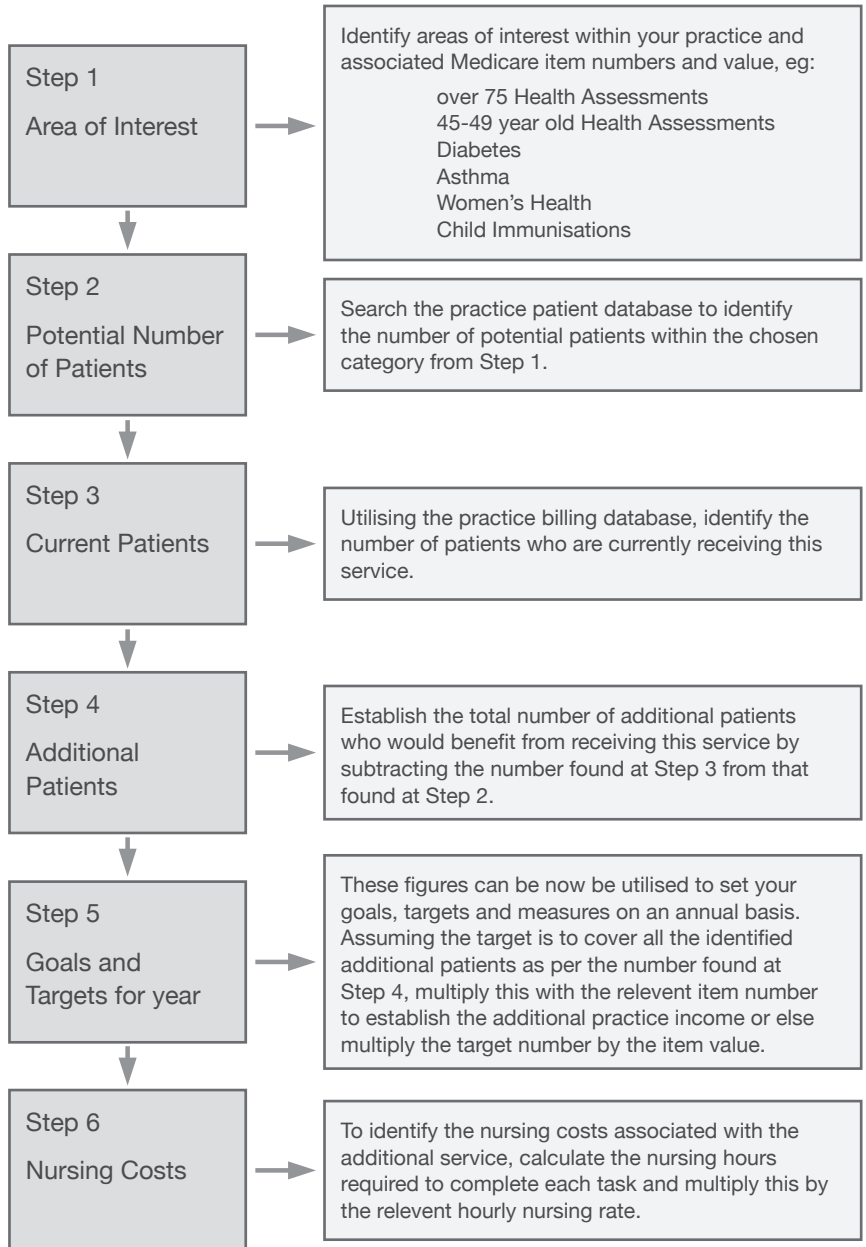


Diagram 2 – Business Case Analysis - Tool

Business Case Example:

Step 1 – Service to be offered Over 75's Health Assessments (700)	\$171.15
Step 2 – Number of Potential Patients	190
Step 3 – Number of Patients already receiving service	60
Step 4 – Potential Additional Patients	130
Step 5 – Goal over 12 month period	100
Potential increase to practice income Step 5 x Item Number Value	$100 \times \$171.15 = \mathbf{\$17\ 115\ p.a.}$
Step 6 – Nursing Costs Nurse time to complete assessment x Total No of Patients x Nursing Cost Rate	$45\ \text{mins} \times 100 = 75\ \text{hours p.a.}$ $75\ \text{hours} \times \$25/\text{hr} = \mathbf{\$1875\ p.a.}$

For a more detailed Income Projection Analysis please refer to the Resource References on page 28.

Step 3

Employment

Options

Step 3. Employment Options

Once you have completed the *Practice Nurse Task List* and established the number of hours a Practice Nurse is needed, the practice is then able to identify the method of employment that would best suit the practice requirements.

Table 3 – Employment Option Comparison shows the various employment options that are available and outlines the main differences of each. The *Employment Options Comparison Table* describes the minimum legal requirements for each option. The wage ranges have been identified from the research conducted in the 2007 (NiGP) Urban Work Group Report. For links to available pay scales and relevant legislation please review the Resource References on page 28.

A nurse can be employed directly, independently contracted or a combination of both methods.

Practice Employees are employed to suit the number of hours the practice requires and provide a wide range of duties to support your practice and practice team.

Independent Contractors are employed for specific tasks designated by the practice. They require their own indemnity Insurance.

The *Combined Practice Employee/Contractor Model* remuneration method can be a combination of salary for employee related tasks and/or bonus payments related to performance on set targets and measures agreed by the practice and based on patient population. For example, the number of Health Assessments, GP Management Plans, Diabetes Cycles of Care, Asthma Cycles of Care, Mental Health Care Plans, Immunisations, PAP Smears and related Service Incentive Payments & Outcomes Payments expected on a monthly basis. Examples are provided in *Table 4 - Remuneration for these Specified Nursing Tasks*.

Employment Options Comparison

Model	Practice Employee			Independent Contractor
	Full Time	Part Time	Casual	Contract
Options of Employment	Full Time	Part Time	Casual	Contract
Hours of Work / Week	38-40	20-32	6-26	As negotiated based on requirement
Remuneration	Wage Ranges from \$18-28 p.h Dependant on experience & Pay scale used.			\$24-38 p.h.
Annual Leave	Minimum 4 weeks per annum pro-rata, loading of 17.5% of ordinary pay		Not eligible	Not eligible
Personal/ carer's leave (includes sick leave)	10 days paid leave per annum pro-rata.		Not eligible	Not eligible
Professional development	2 days per annum		Negotiated	Negotiated
	<i>Negotiated cost of course reimbursed by Practice</i>			
Superannuation	9% of ordinary time earnings			Responsibility of contractor
Public liability and Public Indemnity Insurance	Responsibility of Employer			Responsibility of contractor
Public holidays	10-13 days per annum as per State Entitlement Penalty rates apply from 100% to 150% per hourly rate, or a day off without loss of pay.			Not eligible
Long Service Leave	<i>Paid leave at the completion of a period of employment and can vary between States, and is based on ordinary time earnings governed by the State legislation</i>			Responsibility of contractor
Bereavement Leave	Two days paid leave On each occasion of death / serious illness of an immediate family / household member			Not eligible
Parental Leave	52 weeks of unpaid leave for permanent employees and eligible casual employees			Not eligible
Travel Allowance	All Mileage reimbursed for Home visits			

All information is based on the data collected from a survey conducted in February – April 2007. These are to be used as a guide only and are not necessarily recommended by the NiGP Urban Group.

Please check the relevant industrial requirements and awards for further information.

Table 3 – Employment Options Comparison

Remuneration for Specified Nursing Tasks

Task	Casually Employed	Independently Contracted
Sessional Clinics - Immunisation (minimum 2hrs with 1 hr for preparation)	\$30/hr Plus \$2/vaccination	\$38-\$50/hr
Sessional Clinics - Chronic Disease (minimum 2hrs with 1 hr for preparation) Diabetes, Mental Health, Asthma, Weight Management, Coronary Heart Disease, Lifestyle Management	\$30/hr	\$38-\$50/hr
Health Assessments (HA)	\$20/ HA	\$90/HA
GP Management Plans (GPMP)	\$25/GPMP	\$60/GPMP
Team Care Arrangements (TCA)	\$25/TCA	\$45/TCA

All information is based on the data collected from a survey conducted in February – April 2007. These are to be used as a guide only and are not necessarily recommended by the NIGP Urban Group. **Please check the relevant industrial requirements and awards for further information.**

Table 4 – Remuneration for Specified Nursing Tasks

Step 4 Other Considerations

Step 4. Other Considerations

Consider the room capacity within your practice to accommodate the services of a nurse:

Access to files or computer within treatment room setting/ own office.

Clinics: Patient Confidentiality & Privacy need to be considered.

The Resource References on page 28 provides information on:

Nurse Registration status which can be checked online prior to employment.

Professional Code of Conduct.

Indemnity Insurance sources for Independent Contractors.

When selecting a nurse for employment, it may be useful to understand their past work experience and match their acquired skills to the list of tasks you have identified from utilising the '*Practice Nurse Task List*'.

The interview process provides the opportunity to explore these skills and discover areas where further training or an update of skills is necessary to ensure optimal benefits from the employment of a nurse.

There are professional development and further training opportunities available for nurses in many areas of interest within General Practice and these include:

Pap Smear Provider Course, Sexual Health Courses, Women's Health Courses.

Nurse Immuniser Courses

Diabetes Educator Courses

Asthma Educator Courses

Midwifery Training

Other Professional Development.

The courses outlined above complement existing nurse training and allow the nurse to become more specialised within their role and thus provide additional services as listed in Section Four of the *Practice Nurse Task List (Condensed)*, titled, '*Advanced Primary Care*'. Further information is available within the Resource References on page 28.

Resource References

Nursing In General Practice Recruitment and Orientation Resources: A Guide for General Practices, Practice Nurses and Divisions of General Practice - www.agpn.com.au

Information for General Practice, Information for Nurses and Information for Patients - www.agpn.com.au

The Nursing in General Practice Urban Group Divisions' websites all contain valuable information for Practice Nurses including **Orientation Manuals, sample Position Descriptions, Business Cases and information on Professional Development activities:**

Brisbane South Division of General Practice - www.bsdgp.com.au

Gold Coast Division of General Practice – www.gcdgp.com.au

GP Partners – www.gppartners.com.au

Ipswich and West Moreton Division of General Practice – www.iwmdgp.org.au

General Practice Logan Area Network – www.gplan.com.au

Redcliffe Bribie Caboolture Division of General Practice – www.rbcdgp.com.au

South East Alliance of General Practice, Brisbane – www.seagp.org.au

Income Projection Tool CDM Calculator

www.gpqld.com.au/page/Programs/Nursing_in_General_Practice_NiGP/NiGP_-_Qld_Divisions_Resources/

Professional Development - Diabetes Educator Course and Information

www.daq.org.au/content/?id=762

www.adea.com.au/public/content/ViewCategory.aspx?id=46

General Practice Queensland - www.gpqld.com.au

The RCNA Nursing In General Practice Kit, Competency Standards for Practice Nurses and sources of Indemnity Insurance can be downloaded online at www.rcna.org.au.

Australian Practice Nurse Association also has numerous resources, information for Practice Nurses, Indemnity Insurance - www.apna.asn.au.

Queensland Nursing Council Registration details

www.qnc.qld.gov.au/register/register.aspx

Australian Government – Employment and Workplace Relations Service for Australians Website - www.workplace.gov.au,
www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/InTheWorkplace/IndependentContractors/

www.foodsafetymatters.gov.au/industrial_relations/wage_rates_nursing.asp
www.wageline.qld.gov.au/aol/summary_docs/current/nurses1.pdf
www.wageline.qld.gov.au/awardsacts/showDoc.jsp?Awards/N0130/SCHEDULE+3+-+Generic+level+statements+-+Registered+Nurses
www.wageline.qld.gov.au/awardsacts/awardTree.jsp?_store=Awards&_id=N0130

Related Medicare Item Numbers for services provided by a Nurse on behalf of Medical Practitioner

www9.health.gov.au/mbs/fullDisplay.cfm?type=item&q=10993&qt=ItemID

Immunisations

www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/incentives/gpii/index.shtml
www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/incentives/files/mbs_items_for_immunisation_and_wound_management_nov_2005.pdf

Cervical Smears Undertaken by Nurse

www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/incentives/files/mbs_items_for_pap_smears_nov_2005.pdf

EPC Care Planning Medicare Item numbers (721-731)

www9.health.gov.au/mbs/fullDisplay.cfm?type=note&q=A.30&qt=noteID&criteria=EPC%20
www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/incentives/pip/payment-formula/care-planning.shtml

Asthma Cycle of Care

www9.health.gov.au/mbs/fullDisplay.cfm?type=item&qt=ItemID&q=2546
www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/incentives/pip/files/asthma-cycle-of-care.pdf

Practice Nurse Shortage Incentive

www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/incentives/pip/files/ma_guidelines_for_practice_nurses_allied_health_workers_for_urban_areas.pdf

Diabetes Cycle of Care

www9.health.gov.au/mbs/fullDisplay.cfm?type=item&qt=ItemID&q=2517
www9.health.gov.au/mbs/fullDisplay.cfm?type=item&q=10951&qt=item&criteria=EPC%20

