

SCOPE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL PRACTICE

The broad scope of today's health sector allows for a wide range of activities in which nurses may potentially become professionally self-employed and expert. Basically, nursing entrepreneurship involves nurses owning and selling, for example, the following products and/or services:

- nursing services,
- health care products and devices:
 - development
 - assessment
 - sale
- legal services,
- health care/policy consultation, and
- health care/policy publications.

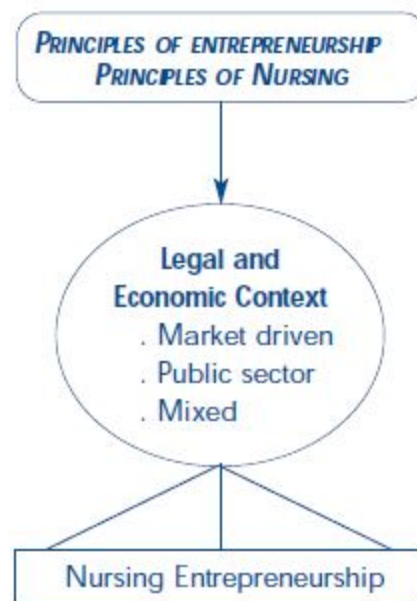
In these guidelines the focus is on the **nurse entrepreneur providing direct nursing services**, with the understanding that entrepreneurship must adapt to the legislative, financial and political realities and expectations of the country, province or locality.

Major factors are the health sector's specific professional regulation and financial policies, and whether health care is a public or a private service or a combined public **and** private service. The development, scope of practice and regulation of nurse entrepreneurs will therefore largely depend on the economic infrastructure and policies implemented at the national, regional and/or local levels (see Figure 1). The variations of nurse entrepreneur practice, reimbursement systems and regulation are as numerous as the different contexts within which they evolve.

Nurse entrepreneurs are found in all three economic systems: market driven, mixed and even the public sector. For example, nurse midwives within the public health

systems have for many years been allowed to practice as independent entrepreneurs. And there is a growing trend of independent practice being in fact *purchased* by the public sector and funded by public monies, thus allowing the development of entrepreneurship in a public health system.

FIGURE 1: NURSING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ITS EVOLUTION



BACKGROUND

Nursing entrepreneurship dates back to the turn of the century. In fact, until World War II many nurses were in independent practice. For example, in 1930 over 60% of all registered nurses in Canada were involved in independent private-duty nursing.³³ Their active participation in the military service, public health nursing, private-duty and home nursing made them highly visible in society.