



NEWSLETTER 11: March 2008

THE NURSE PRACTITIONER ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF NEW ZEALAND (NPAC-NZ)

Introduction

The Nurse Practitioner Advisory Committee of New Zealand (NPAC-NZ) was established in May 2002 for the purpose of the nursing profession to work collaboratively on matters relating to the registration of Nurse Practitioners (NPs) and the development of the Nurse Practitioner model within New Zealand/Aotearoa. NPAC-NZ comprises of representatives of the four major professional nursing representative associations working with the Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ) under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding. The Committee meets face to face three times yearly and holds monthly teleconferences. This newsletter provides an update of the activities of NPAC-NZ since November 2007 and reports the meeting on 6 March 2008.

New Members

It is with some sadness that NPAC-NZ has received resignations from three members. Suzette Gisler and Mark Smith, both representatives of the New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses and Janet Maloney-Moni representative of the National Council of Maori Nurses. Mark has been a long serving member of NPAC-NZ and made a significant contribution to the committee's work in relation to mental health NP development and education. Suzette was recently appointed however has subsequently changed her position and now works for the Nursing Council. Janet was also a long serving member of the committee. Janet provided a significant contribution to the committee's work in relation to NP development and the health care needs and outcomes for Maori. New members rejuvenate thinking. Charlotte Thompson is welcomed as an incoming NZNO representative.

Legislative Barriers

Fiona Coster, senior analyst, Ministry of Health, is leading the project to address legislative barriers to innovation in health care. Fi met with NPAC-NZ in March to discuss progress on this first stage of a wider project. Sixty nine pieces of legislation have been identified as potential barriers to NP practice. Fourteen different government departments are involved. The Minister has given his support to moving forward to address the prioritised list of legislative barriers and Fi is meeting with the 14 departments to progress this work. Once agreement has been reached timelines should be confirmed by the end of April 2008 and a paper prepared for Cabinet. However where legislation is currently under review, departments will be asked to consider addressing the barriers within those reviews. NPAC-NZ will continue to report progress on this significant undertaking through the newsletter.

NPAC-NZ also discussed the Public Health Bill with Fi and Mark Jones, Chief Nurse, Ministry of Health. A number of clauses in this Bill restrict provision of services to medical practitioners when nurse practitioners would be able to provide those services to meet need. NPAC-NZ has presented a submission to this effect to the Health Select Committee.

Clinical Barriers to NP Practice

The issue of restrictions on ordering radiological investigations in some districts was discussed with Mark Jones. NPAC-NZ has written to the Australasian College of

Radiologists seeking a meeting and Mark has agreed to undertake further work within the Ministry. Other clinical and organisational barriers will be addressed on a case by case basis as they arise.

Primary Health Care – rural

Kirsty Murrell-McMillan, incoming chair of the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network, took the opportunity to meet with NPAC-NZ as she was attending a meeting in the same offices. She outlined the development of rural Nurse Practice positions and discussed a range of issues for both potential Nurse Practitioners and for the roll out of the model in the rural sector. This was a wonderful opportunity for NPAC-NZ and the Network to establish an ongoing relationship and communication strategy.

Nursing Council Reviews

Marion Clark, CEO Nursing Council, and Carolyn Reed, Education Adviser Nursing Council, met with NPAC-NZ to discuss the analysis of the submissions received in response to the review of the NP competencies. NPAC-NZ had made a comprehensive submission on this review. Marion reported that the submissions raised a number of matters which related to the scope of practice of the NP and rather than making change to the competencies at this point, Council had ordered a wider review of the scope to be undertaken with the competencies being finalised afterwards.

Discussion between NPAC-NZ and Council arising from submissions points included

- Whether prescribing should become a compulsory requirement or not for NP registration
- The breadth of the special area of practice and titles
- The maintenance requirements
- Education equivalence
- Whether the competencies for NP registration should differ from those for education programmes
- Overseas NP candidates and whether there were ways to facilitate a faster registration process

NPAC-NZ will be making a comprehensive submission on the scope review which Council hopes to complete by early 2009.

Nurse Prescribing

The change of NP prescribing from the designated class to the authorised prescriber category continues to exercise the minds and energy of NPAC-NZ members. All nursing groups are intent on making this happen and it is reported that the Minister of Health supports this move also. While work has begun by the Nursing Council on RN designated prescribing, continued action on moving NP prescribing to the authorised category will go hand in hand with it.

DHBNZ Nurse Practitioner Facilitation Programme

Susanne Trim provided an update on the facilitation programme. Of note, are that a NP champion has been identified within each DHB area and that applications for a contestable innovations fund were being received. Closing date was 15 March. The purpose of the facilitation programme is to advance implementation of the NP model and there appears to be a very positive response from the sector. Further information on the facilitation programme can be accessed via the DHBNZ website www.dhbnz.org.nz

The next NPAC-NZ meeting will be 18 July 2008 and a further newsletter will be sent following that meeting. Please distribute this newsletter widely to all those who may be interested.

c/- PO Box 1258, Palmerston North, New Zealand
Telephone: (06) 358 6000 Facsimile: (06) 358 6000
E-mail: admin@nurse.org.nz