



**Submission on Nursing Council of New Zealand's
DRAFT Code of Conduct
February 2012**

Submission to:

Nursing Council of New Zealand

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New Zealand

Submission prepared by:

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The College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ) provides a forum for critical inquiry into professional, educational and research issues relating to nurses and to the achievement of equitable outcomes for health consumers as acknowledged in the College vision for 100% access, zero disparities. The College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ) acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the foundation document of this nation and this, therefore, underpins all activities undertaken by the College.



The College appreciates the opportunity to comment on and provide feedback regarding the Draft Code of Conduct. The following are collated responses from members of the College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ).

Overall members have endorsed the Draft Code of Conduct as a comprehensive and well constructed document, which is clearly written, relevant to contemporary nursing practice and deemed to be easily interpreted by nurses as well as members of the public. The inclusion of guidelines surrounding the use of social media is particularly welcomed. The guidance boxes provide clear and concise expectations for professional conduct.

Comments and suggestions relating to the structure of the document include:

- Pg.4: Values underpinning professional conduct/Partnership. Suggest the inclusion of a statement which acknowledges the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as underpinning this Code of Conduct.
- Pg 6 (1.8): Conscientious objection. This term has commonly been associated with a nurses right to absolve themselves of involvement with terminations of pregnancy due to personal ethical beliefs. It is suggested that if this section is specifically referring to terminations of pregnancy, then this should be expressly written as such, thus avoiding any confusion or potential use of this clause as grounds for exemption from other nursing tasks or duties. It is also suggested that consideration should be given to a preamble to the Code of Conduct, articulating an expectation that prior to entering the nursing profession an individual would need to consider potential challenges to their personal values and beliefs, preparing to face these issues as they arise and only utilising a withdrawal from provision of care as a last resort.
- Pg 6 (1.10): “Act immediately if a health consumer has suffered harm for any reason”. Whilst it is acknowledged that this implicitly refers to harm caused to the health consumer by a nurse, this needs to be made more explicit in this section.
- Pg 21: Glossary/Definition of a nurse. As it stands, this statement conflicts with the legislative definition of ‘nurse’, suggest adding “for the purpose of this document” at the outset of the current text.
- Addressing the health needs of vulnerable people: Whilst Pg 8 (2.8) and Pg 14 (6.2) speak to the need for nurses to promote and protect the needs of vulnerable people, it is suggested that a section could be included within principle 2 that expresses the requirement of nurses to be advocates and promoters of social justice.