



**College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ) Inc**

PO Box 1258  
Palmerston North 4440

Phone: 06 358 6000

Fax: 06 358 6000

Email: [admin@nurse.org.nz](mailto:admin@nurse.org.nz)

Website: [www.nurse.org.nz](http://www.nurse.org.nz)

## **Feedback On Two Draft Documents On Refugee And Asylum Seeker Health**

A. a position statement, which provides an outline of the RACP's position on four key areas: access to healthcare, assessments, promoting long term health, and detention.

B. a policy statement, which provides a summary of the evidence that has informed the RACP's position.

**January 2015**

**Sent to:**

Royal Australasian College of Physicians

[racpconsult@racp.edu.au](mailto:racpconsult@racp.edu.au)

**Provided on behalf of the College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ) Inc by:**

Annette Mortensen PhD, MPhil (Nursing), RN, PG Dip Ed, BA  
Programme Manager: Asian, Refugee and Migrant Health Action Plan  
Northern Regional Alliance Limited (NRA) (formerly NDSA)

[Annette.Mortensen@nra.health.nz](mailto:Annette.Mortensen@nra.health.nz)

## **Background:**

### **The College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ) Inc**

The College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ) Inc is a professional body of New Zealand registered nurses and nurse practitioners from all regions and specialities both within and outside of the District Health Board (DHB) setting. It provides a voice for the nursing profession and professional commentary on issues that affect nurses and also the health of the whole community, aiming for excellence in nursing practice and health care delivery which addresses disparities in health.

---

## **Feedback:**

### **A: RACP Refugee and Asylum Seeker Health Position Statement**

Some aspects of the statements and associated recommendations have a greater focus on the Australian rather than the New Zealand situation, due to the complexity of the Australian policy environment and the relative stability of the New Zealand intake.

In particular the following section:  
p.10

#### **2.2 Access to healthcare for asylum seekers**

**Asylum seekers should have access to healthcare and pharmaceuticals and asylum seekers in Australia require continuous Medicare cover.**

Asylum seekers on bridging visas in Australia without Medicare cover face significant challenges in accessing healthcare and medicines. A lack of, or lapse in, Medicare access is likely to increase overall costs to the health, immigration and service systems through increased need for case management to establish pathways to care, delays in presentations leading to higher severity illness, cost shifting from primary and preventive care to acute care and specialist services, and considerable administrative inefficiency. Timely processing of bridging visas to establish Medicare access is essential.

The RACP supports New Zealand's policy of providing full access to publicly funded healthcare services for asylum seekers once they have lodged a claim for refugee status.

**If more detail regarding eligibility for asylum seekers is required I have included the following:**

Refugees and asylum seekers

People applying for refugee or protection status, or appealing to the Immigration and Protection Tribunal against refusal of refugee/protected person status are eligible for the full range of publicly funded services. However, they will become ineligible if their claim for status is not successful, or their appeal is not upheld.

<http://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/eligibility-publicly-funded-health-services/guide-eligibility-publicly-funded-health-services-0/refugees-and-protected-persons>

## **Refugees and protected persons**

Guide to eligibility for publicly funded health and disability services.

### **Eligibility:**

Refugees and protected persons, applicants for refugee and protection status, and people appealing against refusal of refugee or protection status are eligible for publicly funded health and disability services. Victims and suspected victims of people trafficking offences are also eligible for publicly funded health and disability services.

The person must have:

- applied for refugee or protection status and be awaiting a decision, OR
- been granted refugee or protection status, OR
- appealed to the Immigration and Protection Tribunal against refusal of refugee status and be awaiting a decision OR
- be a victim or a suspected victim of a people trafficking offence.

**Criteria:** B10, B11 and B12, Health and Disability Services Eligibility Direction 2011.

### **Proof of eligibility:**

You will need to show your health service provider proof of your refugee or protection status. This will be:

- a letter from Immigration New Zealand confirming that you have been recognised as a refugee or protected person, OR
- a recent letter from Immigration New Zealand confirming that you have a current application for refugee or protection status, OR
- a recent letter from Immigration New Zealand confirming that you have an appeal before the Immigration and Protection Tribunal for refugee or protection status OR
- confirmation from the Police stating that the person is a victim or a suspected victim of a people trafficking offence.

You will also need to show proof that you are the person in the letter. This might be:

- your Refugee Travel Document issued under the Passport Act 1992, OR
- your Certificate of Identity issued under the Immigration Act 1987.

**Note:** The type or length of visa held is not relevant to these criteria.



A person whose appeal against refusal of refugee status has been declined by the Immigration and Protection Tribunal is not eligible for publicly funded health and disability services. Appeals to the Immigration and Protection Tribunal for other reasons (eg. removal from New Zealand) do not satisfy the eligibility criteria.

[http://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/eligibility-publicly-funded-health-services/eligibility-questions-and-answers-service-providers#Refugees, protected persons and asylum seekers](http://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/eligibility-publicly-funded-health-services/eligibility-questions-and-answers-service-providers#Refugees,protectedpersonsandasylumseekers)

Annette Mortensen PhD, MPhil (Nursing), RN, PG Dip Ed, BA  
Programme Manager: Asian, Refugee and Migrant Health Action Plan  
Northern Regional Alliance Limited (NRA) (formerly NDSA)

[Annette.Mortensen@nra.health.nz](mailto:Annette.Mortensen@nra.health.nz)