



College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ) Inc

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Submission on:

Nurse Practitioner Training & Development

Submission To: info@healthworkforce.govt.nz

The College of Nurses is a professional body of New Zealand Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners from all regions within New Zealand and specialties 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the office of the Chief Nursing Officer and Health Workforce New Zealand on the evaluation of the Nurse Practitioner Training programme.

Responses are provided in relation to the questions raised here

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/nursing/nurses-new-zealand/nurse-practitioners-new-zealand#feedback> .

Training programme

1. To what extent do you think the nurse practitioner training programme should be expanded?

- The nurse practitioner training programme could be expanded beyond the existing two providers of the NPTP. We argue however that there is an ideal cohort size that is ten minimum in terms of economic viability and supporting the academic and clinical resource and networking supports that enrich a program.
- We suggest that the South Island be an early consideration.
- Those approved education providers must be able to meet a threshold of critical resourcing i.e. sufficient Nurse Practitioner academic mentors, a programme led by research active staff, doctorally qualified.
- We feel strongly that University providers are in the best position to provide this.

2. What are the barriers/challenges?

- Funding – location of payment. We believe this should follow the student rather than be assigned to the service provider. This will ensure the student receives the appropriate level of support
- There are currently issues with releasing students on the NPTP to dedicate the appropriate amount of time to their studies. In rural areas particularly, resourcing to allow for backfill of positions needs to be addressed.
- Detailed transparency is needed about how NPTP funds are used. Financial reports provided to HWNZ are just 5 lines with no itemisation of expenditure. No requirement to refund under-spent funds.
- Applicant numbers halved for 2017 and 2018 intakes - mostly due to NCNZ requirement for two clinical placements, at least one of which must be with a NP as supervisor. This is an appropriate requirement, but is currently too challenging for many applicants.
- The disparity between NPTP funded students and non-NPTP funded students is 'managed' by the Schools involved, but there must be equitable treatment of students who are enrolled in effect in the same program. The School bears the cost of the difference (significantly, travel and time to do site-visits). Nursing Council has expedited non-NPTP students through panels in the same way as NPTP students.

- The required link to the offer of a job is, on one level, very valuable, but is a glass ceiling for some NP candidates. If an organisation does not see the need for a NP, that may end the student's aspirations unless they find another employer (highly problematic in rural areas or small towns). Additionally in the context of General Practice the practice situation can change during the candidacy due to change of staff or change of ownership leaving the candidate with no follow through on a promised job offer.
- We are especially concerned by the lack of accountability around the promise of employment and indeed have learned of some new NPs who are being paid as RNs by the very organisation that signed a guarantee of employment as an NP.
- The focus should ideally change from support of individuals towards an overall support for proper workforce planning. We suggest local Directors of Nursing are ideally placed to ensure overall collaborative workforce planning and to oversee accountability for guaranteed employment.

3. What are the potential positive benefits of expanding the programme?

- Employment certainty (probable).
- Increases sector awareness of the NP role.
- Stakeholders have more choice in relation to education provider.

4. What should be done to encourage wider participation by Maori and Pacific nurses in Nurse Practitioner Training Programmes?

- Cohort effect is a powerful encouragement.
- Critical to have thoughtful pipeline development to ensure students can achieve at the level necessary for entry to the program.
- Cultural support and mentoring within the service providers that is closer to home and the context in which the NP will be working after completion of the programme and registration.
- More resourcing targeted for communities that have greater unmet need and deprivation.
- Greater accountability to support successful completion of training.
- Meaningful Māori input into program review and development.
- Increase Māori educators within the tertiary institutes delivering the programme.
- Increase the number of Māori supervisors available.
- Profile existing Māori Nurse Practitioners and Māori NP interns.

5. What should be done to ensure viability of current Nurse Practitioner Training Programmes?

- Sustainable and certain funding for the NPTP rather than an annual decision to fund.
- Employer buy in – centralised predictions of future NP growth.
- High level support for the NP role and its cost effective contribution especially to Māori health, primary health care and aged care.

6. What could be done to improve the selection process?

- We consider the current selection process to be rigorous and appropriate.

Nurse practitioner role

1. What should be done to raise awareness of the role of nurse practitioners and the benefit of employing nurse practitioners?

- Communication plan across the sector including campaigns aimed at the general public, key policy makers and health professional groups.

2. What should be done to encourage understanding of the nurse practitioner scope of practice?

- Make visible to funders, DHBs, PHOs, NGOs and the public, the role and potential benefits of the NP role.
- Demonstrate outcomes achieved by NPs particularly for Māori.
- Ministry of Health explicit leadership in socialising the role and dispelling myths such as that General practice cannot afford to employ NPs.

Career development

1. What should be done to support ongoing career development for nurse practitioners?

- Explore the concept of a supported entry to practice as an NP through increased supported clinical hours.
- Explicit high level expectations about development of models of care that include Nurse Practitioners.
- Funded continuing education, appropriately resourced to be consistent with other scopes of practice at a similar level (e.g: medical practitioners) and aligned with competency requirements.
- Opportunity for General Practice business ownership including shareholding.



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