



Nurse Practitioners New Zealand
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Dear NZNO Delegates,

Re: Funding for Continuing Education for Nurse Practitioners

The Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ) defines only three scopes of nursing practice; Enrolled Nurse, Registered Nurse and Nurse Practitioner (NP). The registration competencies for Nurse Practitioners recognise their unique advanced practice role, which includes diagnosis and prescription of treatments and medicines. Other senior nurse positions, such as clinical nurse specialist, are not recognised as separate scopes of practice by NCNZ.

The complex nature of the roles filled by Nurse Practitioners requires advanced, continuing education that is often not available in New Zealand. Many Nurse Practitioners find that they are required to travel overseas in order to access the education they need. Currently, there is significant variation in the advanced education funding available to Nurse Practitioners from their employers. The current funding for continuing education ranges from nothing available to \$6,000 per NP. This has resulted in an inequitable and non-sustainable situation nationally for NPs.

Nurse Practitioners work at the highest clinical level and have close, collegial working relationships with medical teams and other members of the multi-disciplinary team. The lack of funding for continuing education is in stark contrast to that which is available to our medical colleagues. The current SMO collective agreement provides for \$16,000 per year per person for expenses related to continuing education and 10 days study leave in addition to annual leave.

The unique scope of practice for NPs is recognised in New Zealand legislation. Their education needs are also unique. We request that the next MECA negotiations include standardised continuing education funding of \$7,000 and 5 days study leave annually for Nurse Practitioners, in a similar mechanism as provided for our medical colleagues.

We are happy to discuss this issue with you further.

Regards,

Dr Michal Boyd
Nurse Practitioner – Older Adults
NPNZ Chair on behalf of Nurse Practitioners New Zealand