

Smokefree position statement

Purpose

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) is committed to a Smokefree nation. This position statement provides a clear statement of NZNO's commitment and provides members with information on working in a Smokefree workplace or environment.

Introduction

As a professional and industrial organisation, NZNO is committed to a Smokefree nation by 2025, with the aim that future generations of New Zealand children will be free from exposure to tobacco and will enjoy Smokefree lives.

As health professionals, our members are well aware of the highly addictive nature of tobacco, and that it causes more deaths in New Zealand than any other drug¹, and is responsible for 5,000 New Zealanders' deaths each year (4,700 smokers and 300 from second-hand smoke), of which 600 are Māori.² Tobacco is the only consumer product in widespread use that directly poses such enormous health risks to users, particularly long term users³. Māori and Pacific people are disproportionately affected – with both Māori and Pacific people more likely to smoke than other New Zealanders. It is unacceptable that statistics still show disparities in smoking rates for Māori, especially those of Māori women who have the highest smoking prevalence rate of any ethnic group (49 percent)⁴.

NZNO role

NZNO is committed to our membership, we provide leadership and advocate for our members regardless of their smoking status: health professionals who smoke; health professionals who quit; or health professionals who have never smoked. We acknowledge that some of our members are smokers and that, as health professionals, they face stigma, and guilt for their addiction, and we want to strongly advocate for our

¹ The Drug Foundation website. 2012. *Tobacco Drug Information*. Wellington: The Drug Foundation. Accessed 4/10/12.

² Health Sponsorship Council website. 2012. *Tobacco Control Information*. Wellington: Health Sponsorship Council.

³ Ministry of Health website. 2012. *Proposal to introduce plain packaging of tobacco products in New Zealand: consultation document*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

⁴ Wilson, D & Fernandez, C. 2008. *Māori women's views on smoking cessation initiatives*. Auckland: Nursing Praxis in New Zealand.

members to have access to supportive programmes and measures to increase successful quitting support services and products. NZNO wishes to acknowledge that being addicted to tobacco does not impede in anyway a health professional's ability, or make them less skilful or trustworthy. We encourage our members to familiarise themselves with their workplace smoke free policies and their responsibilities as employees^{5,6}.

We are committed to policies and actions that are fair and reasonable and aim to:

- > advocate for a smoke free Aotearoa New Zealand by 2025;
- > improve the health and wellbeing of all employees;
- > improve access to free quitting cessation programmes for health professionals and others who wish to quit;
- > increase training and education in cessation programmes, and nicotine replacement therapy;
- > increase participation in public education/campaigns, or research that promotes smoke free;
- > outline smoke free health benefits for clients, families, whānau, and the wider community;
- > reduce inequalities in health statistics for Māori and Pasifika people; and
- > provide access to equal opportunity rights for all members regardless of their smoke free status.

NZNO intends to:

- > encourage nurses to become smoke free role models; lobby the government for increased taxes on tobacco products, plain packaging, and Smokefree legislation.

Health professionals as advocates

The public perceive health professionals to be positive role models, and a trusted and credible workforce. All health professionals have a commitment to being advocates and role models for a smoke free lifestyle. There is strong evidence that brief advice from a health professional is highly effective at encouraging people to try and quit smoking, and to stay smoke free⁷. As the largest group in the health professional workforce in New Zealand, nurses are able to provide effective smoking cessation interventions, and to be powerful advocates for tobacco free homes and communities⁸. Nurses have

⁵ Ministry of Health website 2012. *Smokefree law*. www.smokefreelaws.co.nz Accessed 9/10/12.

⁶ Department of Labour. 2012. *Occupational Health and Safety Information on the HSE Act 1992 and 2002 amendments*. www.osh.dol.govt.nz accessed 9/10/12.

⁷ Ministry of Health. 2011. *Targeting smokers better to help for smokers to quit*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

⁸ Auckland University Technology. 2007. *Smoking and Nurses in New Zealand. ASH-KAN Aotearoa: assessment of smoking history, knowledge and attitudes of nurses in New Zealand*. Auckland: ASH New Zealand.

opportunities to engage with family members who smoke and offer support for them to quit, in order to improve their health as well as to protect the health of their families and whānau, and build a trusting relationship to provide follow up support.⁹ As health professionals, many are involved in asking clients about their smoking status as a clinical ‘vital sign’ and providing brief advice and quit support to current smokers¹⁰.

Information for health professionals working in smoke free workplaces

It is important that:

- > members are familiar with employers’ Smoking Policies as these can vary significantly from employer to employer. For example most DHBs are moving towards a total smoking ban at the workplace including banning smoking on hospital grounds.
- > members are mindful that colleagues, patients and their families may not appreciate you arriving at work smelling of tobacco. Please be considerate about the effects of smoking in your own time on others. This can be detrimental to those you work with and care for.
- > health professionals do not smoke publicly while in their professional attire; staff members who wish to leave their workplace facilities to smoke do so during designated meal/tea breaks but conceal any reference to their workplace. ID badges should be removed and uniforms covered.

NZNO advises members to refrain from smoking at work and discuss any problems associated withdrawal symptoms with your manager so that appropriate support can be provided. You can also contact Quit – Line (0800 778 778).

Where can I find further information:

- > Smokefree nurses Aotearoa www.smokefreennurses.org.nz
- > Quitline www.quit.org.nz or 0800 778 778
- > Aukaiti kaipaipa www.aukatikaipaipa.co.nz
- > Smokefree Coalition www.sfc.org.nz

Date adopted: November 2012
Review date: Month Year
Principal author: Leanne Manson

Reviewed: Month Year, Month Year
Correspondence to: nurses@nzno.org.nz

⁹ AUT University & ASH. 2007. *Smoking and Nurses in New Zealand ASH-KAN Aotearoa: Assessment of smoking history, knowledge and attitudes of nurses in New Zealand*. Auckland: AUT University & ASH.

¹⁰ Ministry of Health. 2012. Health Targets 2012/13 website. health.govt.nz accessed 10/10/12.

Mission statement

NZNO is committed to the representation of members and the promotion of nursing and midwifery. NZNO embraces Te Tiriti o Waitangi and works to improve the health status of all peoples of Aotearoa/ New Zealand through participation in health and social policy development.

© 2012 This material is copyright to the New Zealand Nurses Organisation.

Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced by any process, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the written permission of the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO), PO Box 2128, Wellington 6140.

DRAFT