



Nursing matters

THE NEW ZEALAND
NURSES ORGANISATION'S
PRIORITIES FOR HEALTH



NEW ZEALAND
NURSES
ORGANISATION



Reproduction of material

This material is copyright to the New Zealand Nurses Organisation.
As per the Copyright Act 1994 you may reproduce pages of this document and store it within a retrieval system for your own use only.

This publication must not be reproduced or electronically passed on to other parties without the written permission of the Chief Executive Officer, New Zealand Nurses Organisation, PO Box 2128, Wellington 6140. Phone 04 499 9533, Fax 04 382 9993, Email publications@nzno.org.nz, www.nzno.org.nz

Citation

New Zealand Nurses Organisation. (2014). *Nursing Matters*. Wellington: New Zealand Nurses Organisation.

Written by Senior policy analyst, Marilyn Head

Board of Directors endorsed March 2014

Published in April 2014 by
New Zealand Nurses Organisation
Wellington, New Zealand

ISBN 978-1-877461-62-0

Contents

NZNO priorities for health.....	2
2014 General Election.....	5
A sustainable, fully utilised, nursing workforce	6
Investment in public health	9
A primary health care approach to population health improvement	10
Best start for children	13
Safe clinical environments.....	14
Social and health equity	17
Safe and fair employment.....	18
Nursing matters	21
Equity matters.....	22
Fairness matters.....	22

NZNO priorities for health

Health is at the forefront of most political party agendas and for good reason. Health care is central to the length and quality of our lives, supports our economy through participation and productivity, and is one of the largest and fastest growing areas of government spending.

Nurses provide the key components of health interventions that prevent and treat illness, and empower people and their whānau to be active in the management of their own health care and wellbeing.

But there are barriers to the efficient use of nursing skills and equitable access to health care. New models of care and more investment in public health are necessary to enable the nursing workforce to help all New Zealanders reach their health potential.

We cannot afford to ignore the challenges of increasing inequity, an ageing population and workforce, and changing health needs and opportunities in today's world. Nor should we lose sight of what makes this country a healthy place to live and work: universal rights, fair employment conditions, and quality public services, including a taxpayer-funded health and disability system that, by international standards, delivers first-rate health outcomes for comparatively modest spending.





2014 General Election

The upcoming general election gives us a choice about the future direction of Aotearoa New Zealand. What values should drive decisions on health, employment and use of our natural resources? Your vote can help shape those values.

NZNO believes the whole nursing team must be represented and supported in their practice and in their workplaces, to realise their potential to improve health across the nation.

NZNO has more than 46 000 members, including nurses, midwives, nursing students, kaimahi hauora, health care assistants and allied health care workers. Together we make up around 1/60th of eligible voters and about 1/20th or five per cent of female voters; our voice matters to the health of New Zealanders.

From discussion with members and member groups, including NZNO's 20 specialist colleges and sections, Te Rūnanga o Aotearoa, the national student unit, NZNO board and regional councils, the following priorities for nursing and public health have been identified:

- » A sustainable nursing workforce used to its full extent
- » Investment in public health
- » A primary health care approach to improving population health
- » Safe clinical environments
- » Social and health equity
- » Fair employment
- » Best start for children

A sustainable, fully utilised, nursing workforce

Long-term workforce planning and review is needed to ensure a sustainable nursing workforce that is clinically and culturally competent, reflects the ethnic and gender profile of the population and is able to meet New Zealand's health needs. Workforce planning must also maintain a balance between workforce supply and demand.

Realistic health workforce projections, based on accurate workforce and population health data, are essential to align training and support career pathways for New Zealand-trained nurses. Such projections must include sufficient funded nurse-entry-to-practice (NEtP) positions, postgraduate education, employment and return-to-nursing opportunities, and a systematic reduction in the over reliance on internationally qualified nurses (IQN) to fill skill gaps.

Removing legislative and other barriers to the full use of nursing scopes of practice and accelerating the implementation of the nurse practitioner model and expanded practice for registered and enrolled nurses will ensure a flexible nursing workforce and optimise efficient, interdisciplinary care.

There is an urgent need to address the structural discrimination that hinders appropriate recruitment to and sustained retention of the Māori health workforce.





Investment in public health

Public health interventions that promote healthy living, reduce injury and disease, alleviate suffering and ensure timely access to quality health care are the most cost effective way to reduce future health and social service demands and must be prioritised.

An overarching public health model of care which encompasses both individual and whānau empowerment and social responsibility for health is needed to counter the structural barriers to equitable health care. *Te Whare Tapa Whā* is a public health model of care which meets these criteria.

Appropriate resourcing of the Ministry of Health, PHARMAC, the Accident Compensation Commission (ACC), and other government agencies which rely on evidence to inform policy will optimise health outcomes.

Cost effective public health measures, such as fluoridation and folate enrichment of flour, that prevent harm and reduce health disparities must be implemented nationally.

International agreements such as the Trans Pacific Partnership must not include provisions that have the potential to erode public health.

A primary health care approach to population health improvement

A comprehensive primary health care approach across all health settings is needed to drive the transition to a fully integrated health system, which is patient-centred and interdisciplinary.

Empowering all New Zealanders to reach their health potential requires a fundamental shift in focus and funding to service models that support health and well-being. Such models must include access to good health information and the promotion of health literacy and self-management at all levels of care; early intervention for addiction, mental and sexual health problems; immunisation; and screening and health promotion programmes.

Flexible funding streams to facilitate community-based initiatives, including nurse-led clinics, walk-in centres, and nurse partnerships with other health professionals, will address barriers to care, optimise the use of health workforce skills and reduce future health demand.

Removing funding inequalities to Māori and iwi providers will reduce health disparities.



Quit

Quit To
Smoking?
Ph: 0800 494 24



Best start for children

A universal approach is needed to ensure that all children have their physical, emotional, developmental, social and spiritual needs met, and are able to grow up in a supportive and nurturing environment.

NZNO supports a focus from planning for pregnancy to three years of age and other recommendations in the Health Committee report on the *Inquiry into improving child health outcomes* (2013).

Extending parental leave to 26 weeks, and ensuring culturally appropriate comprehensive social, education and health services for all mothers and children, including integrated midwifery and PHO services and free, accessible primary health care, will help parents ensure their children get the best start in life, reduce entrenched health disparities and maximise the value of health spending.

Safe clinical environments

All health settings require the right number and skill mix of staff, sufficient resources, and the elements that underpin workplace health and safety: knowledge, regulation and sound employment practices. These elements also contribute to achieving best health outcomes.

Clinical environments that are safe for health consumers and health workers require nationally consistent staffing and patient assessment and information systems and tools, eg Care capacity demand management, Trend Care and InteRai.

Other essentials for safe clinical environments include mandatory staffing levels/skill mix in aged care and a commitment to safe and health workplaces in all employment agreements.

A coherent policy for internationally qualified nurses, which includes a single overseas recruitment agency and agreed cultural competence standards, is needed.





Social and health equity

Increasing evidence that more equal societies enjoy better health and prosperity indicates the urgent need to address escalating social, economic and health inequity in Aotearoa, and to develop a national strategy to reduce poverty.

Holistic approaches to the delivery of health, education and social services for Māori, based on Mātauranga Māori, include a range of services that span housing, research, crime prevention, education, welfare and health.

The Living Standards framework adopted by Treasury, which uses a range of social, environmental, human and economic indicators to measure national well-being, is an appropriate policy platform to drive the integrated action on the social determinants of health needed to reduce poverty, remove structural discrimination, and support healthy whānau, communities and workplaces.

All policy initiatives and major social and infrastructural projects such as housing, transport, environment and education projects, should be subject to a health impact assessment and evaluation.

Safe and fair employment

A living wage, safe workplaces, collective bargaining and collective agreements, good faith bargaining and contracting and equal pay for work of equal value in all settings are fundamental aspects of a fair and healthy society.

Recent amendments to the Employment Relations Act that have undermined its purpose of addressing the inherent imbalance in employment relationships and have removed protections for vulnerable workers must be repealed, to ensure fairness in employment.

Similarly, workplace health and safety legislation must include the tripartite - government, employer, employee - governance recommended by the Independent Taskforce on Health and Safety.

It must also include stronger accountability and mitigation measures to reduce the unacceptably high incidence of workplace injury and harm. Building a culture of safety requires good data and systematic education and training.

More consideration needs to be given to occupational disease (including appropriate compensation), and the harmful effects of precarious employment.

I need a break because:

Otherwise
I get sore
Wrists



#GiveUsABreak



Nursing matters

- » Give nurses time to care so they can realise their potential to improve health care
- » Ensure appropriate safe staffing levels and skill mix in all health settings
- » Involve nurses in decision making at all levels to support system changes and new models of care
- » Increase training and employment opportunities for the Māori nursing workforce
- » Ensure full employment of New Zealand graduates
- » Provide an alternate, safe clinical pathway to register overseas-trained Pacific nurses living in New Zealand
- » Introduce nationally consistent education, supported education and training for HCAs, particularly in aged care
- » Ensure nurses' access to funding for postgraduate education, clinical training and leadership opportunities
- » Ensure long-term workforce planning for a culturally competent and sustainable nursing workforce able to meet current and future health needs
- » Reduce dependence on immigration
- » Ensure access to flexible funding and contracting streams for nurse-led primary health care
- » Remove legislative, funding and other barriers to advanced and innovative practice, eg through better systems and primary-specialist integration

Equity matters

- » Adopt *Te Whare Tapa Whā*, a public health and wellness model of care unique to Aotearoa
- » Ensure integrated action on addressing the socio-economic and cultural determinants of health
- » Fund universal access to primary health care
- » Maintain strong public health and ACC systems
- » Implement Māori-centred approaches to health care service delivery for Māori
- » Resource health promotion to increase health literacy, support healthy living and optimise health potential
- » Require integrated health impact assessment on all policy initiatives and major projects
- » Ensure access to affordable medicines and medical devices via PHARMAC
- » Ensure national fluoridation of public water supplies
- » Ensure folate enrichment of flour

Fairness matters

- » Enact fair employment legislation that balances the rights of employees and employers
- » Promote collective bargaining and agreements
- » Protect vulnerable workers and address the rise in precarious employment
- » Legislate for a living wage
- » Require safe, healthy workplaces
- » Pay workers their worth
- » Re-establish the Pay and Employment Equity Unit
- » Extend paid parental leave to 26 weeks
- » Ensure openness in debating the potential health impacts of any free trade agreements, such as the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement

A woman in a yellow jacket is laughing joyfully while holding a large white protest sign with a red border. The sign contains the text 'OCEANIA! BE FAIR TO THOSE WHO CARE'. She is surrounded by other people at what appears to be a protest or demonstration. In the background, a man in a blue shirt holds a sign that says 'TOOT', and another man in a blue and white striped hoodie is visible. The scene is outdoors with trees and a clear sky.

OCEANIA!

BE FAIR

**TO THOSE
WHO CARE**

SEWU



Level 3, Willbank Court, 57 Willis Street, Wellington 6011
PO Box 2128, Wellington 6140
Phone 0800 28 38 48
www.nzno.org.nz