

2020 and Beyond: A Vision for Nursing

‘To mua I te tau
Rua mano rua tekau’
He tirohanga mo nga Tapuhitanga

Executive Summary

Introduction

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) is Aotearoa New Zealand’s largest professional and industrial organisation for nurses. With a membership of over 46,000, NZNO has a key leadership role in the New Zealand health sector. In 2007, NZNO began preliminary work on developing a vision for the future. In 2010, a background document and draft vision were written and an extensive consultation process based on the principles of partnership and collegiality was initiated. The vision is designed to provide all members of the profession of nursing in New Zealand a future to which they can aspire, and that strategically guides nursing practice. It also provides a platform for the development of effective policy frameworks in education, employment, social and health policy, legislative and regulatory areas, and practice.

Method

A comprehensive background document underpins the vision, identifying a range of challenges and opportunities for nursing development over the next twenty to thirty years. Marsha Rhea’s (2005) future thinking anticipatory learning framework was applied to the field of nursing in New Zealand and provided the basis for analysis. The key tenets of Rhea’s method are foresight, identity, direction setting and innovation. Based on Rhea’s framework, five critical areas of nursing practice were firstly oriented in time (the current situation) and then examined in light of potential official futures (the futures that current national and international policy documents advocate for). An analysis of trends and developments utilising a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) approach enabled identification of key areas nursing can focus on into the future.

Section 1: Background

Analysis: This section provided the context for the study exploring underlying assumptions, demographic trends, technology, genetics, treatment modalities, global issues and issues facing nurses in a range of practice areas. Each area explored the current situation and the implications for nursing.

Findings: Key issues identified included the ageing population and ageing nursing workforce, the impact of new technology and advances in the field of genetics, the development of new treatment modalities and associated costs, and the impact of globalisation on health including nurse migration and global pandemics. The implications of funding cuts in the health sector and the impact of this on nurses in practice, the importance of leadership, increasing patient acuity, low staffing levels, and poor pay for nurses working in Māori and Iwi health services were also identified as critical issues.

Section 2: Health and Social Policy Frameworks

Analysis: This section analysed current health and social policy issues that impact on nursing in New Zealand. This included te Tiriti o Waitangi, the New Zealand health system, the social determinants of health, and a primary health care approach to the provision of health care.

Findings: Key findings indicated the importance of future health and social policy to articulate how the persisting ethnic and social inequalities in health are to be addressed, to emphasise the need for collaborative policy across sectors to address the social determinants of health, and to refocus the provision of health care clearly onto primary health care as the most effective means of addressing health care need, improving health outcomes and addressing health inequities.

Section 3: Legislative and Regulatory Frameworks

Analysis: In this section the key legislative and regulatory frameworks that impact on nursing in New Zealand were discussed including: the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance (HPCA) Act 2003; the role of the Nursing Council; current scopes of practice; the range of existing legislative and other barriers to workforce innovation; and issues surrounding safety including the health care assistant workforce.

Findings: Continuing to develop appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks for practice is an important opportunity both to ensure patient safety and to enable nurses to provide enhanced levels of care. Removing existing legislative and other barriers to practice including improving funding mechanisms for nurses in primary health care and addressing prescribing and other limitations to nurse practitioner and registered nurse practice are required. Addressing health workforce planning, recruitment and retention issues, and the impact of deregulation on nursing in the older adult sector – in particular nurse to patient ratios – are imperative.

Section 4: Models of Care

Analysis: Existing models of care are unlikely to meet changing population health needs and new approaches are needed. This section examined some of the more common models of care currently in existence in nursing and health and some of the proposed models of care.

Findings: Nurse-led clinics, nurse-led intermediary care, and collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches to health care will provide a strong basis for meeting population health needs in the future. Robust evaluation of existing and emerging models of care is required to ensure health inequities are addressed and health needs are met.

Section 5: Education

Analysis: Changing demands on the profession of nursing has seen registered nurse education move from an apprenticeship style of education, to a diploma programme, to a degree programme. Enrolled nurses complete an 18 month diploma programme. New challenges exist to ensure that nursing education programmes meet the changing demands of the health system, and the people it serves.

Findings: While existing structures of undergraduate education meet current demand, it is important to remain open to future opportunities. Insufficient funding for nurses to develop post graduate clinical and research skills, an ageing faculty experiencing poor succession planning and remuneration, a lack of clinical learning placements, and the need to ensure adequate support is available to all new graduate nurses will hinder nursing's efforts to develop the flexible and skilled nursing workforce required to meet future need. Improved collaboration across health and education sectors is required.

Section 6: Employment

Analysis: Quality nursing care improves health outcomes, but quality nursing care cannot be provided without the systems and structures to support it. This section outlined current employment issues facing New Zealand nurses and some of the initiatives intended to ensure nurses have equal access to good health including employment relations and healthy workplaces.

Findings: The significant research that supports the value of nursing to people can be used as a basis for developing effective employment frameworks and as an argument in the bargaining process. Continuing research into safe staffing and healthy workplaces and extending this to look at primary health care and other settings will continue to strengthen our understanding of those factors that impact on nurses in their workplaces. Efforts to retain older nurses in the workplace and attract younger nurses to nursing will need to be strengthened.

Recommendations

This document has examined a number of the trends, issues and developments both within and external to nursing that will shape the provision of nursing care in New Zealand over the next twenty to thirty years. It has also identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that will continue to challenge nursing but also provide us with a direction for the future. Strong leadership, a focus on primary health care and addressing the social determinants of health in all areas of practice, undertaking and utilising nursing research to demonstrate nursing's contribution to improving health outcomes, staying true to nursing's core values, strengthening nursing education, and working together as a profession will guide us as a group into the future.

Further work is required to develop a strategy for addressing many of the issues identified in the background document prior to realization of the vision. It is recommended that the next stage of the vision project is to establish a working group to develop a comprehensive strategy for NZNO to advance the vision and incorporate it into their annual planning process.

Vision Statement: 2020 and Beyond

Nursing is an exciting and dynamic profession with multiple opportunities for every member of the profession to contribute toward achieving optimal health outcomes for individuals, families, whānau, communities and populations. Nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand face a set of challenges that are unprecedented in the history of the profession in this country. New technology, a growing population, an ageing nursing workforce, new treatment modalities, genetics, and the local and global context of health care are emerging within a context of constant restructuring, a tightening economic climate, and nursing workforce variability. The ability of nursing as a profession to achieve improved health outcomes for people through effective nursing interventions is well known within nursing but poorly understood by the public, by other health professionals, and by government. We must continue to meet these challenges head on if we are to enable the profession of nursing to achieve its full potential.

Nursing's common goal is **good health and well being for all**. Specifically nurses and nursing seek to achieve significantly improved health outcomes for our most vulnerable citizens through addressing inequalities in health. All people should have the opportunity to live and work in a safe environment, have access to affordable, quality healthcare whenever and wherever they need it, know how to make appropriate choices about what they eat and how much they exercise, know that in times of hardship there will be financial and social support available to them, and have equal opportunities to achieve good health regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, level of disability or health status. Nurses know and understand how achieving these things will improve people's health. Nurses must advocate for all health and social policies to include evidence of how the social determinants of health will be addressed and how inequalities in health will be improved. Nurses will be actively involved in health policy and service design decision-making.

Health is a human right. Nurses in the future will focus on utilising primary health care and health promotion across the health-illness continuum to keep people well, prevent hospital admissions, manage acute episodes of illness when they arise, and lead improvement in health care. Public and population health approaches including addressing the impact of climate change and environmental degradation will become an increasingly important part of nursing practice. Te Tiriti o Waitangi provides the foundation for health development for all people in New Zealand and nurses will be at the forefront of integrating the principles of te Tiriti in the provision and future development of all health care. Cultural safety, the NZNO Code of Ethics, and the NZNO Definition of Nursing encompass the fundamental values of the nursing profession, providing a foundation for safe and effective practice. Nurses are valued for their input and leadership in developing an effective and efficient publicly funded health system that meets the needs of all New Zealanders. New Zealand nurses will continue to demonstrate their commitment to global health development by supporting their nursing colleagues in developing countries – in particular in Asia and the Pacific.

Nursing will continue to be a **regulated profession** which meets the highest standards of quality and safety in practice. Nursing's professional associations will continue to lead the development of specialist frameworks for nursing practice, provide standards for credentialing, and develop standards of practice for all regulated nurses. Nursing will be at the forefront of research into interdisciplinary and nursing practice, and the mechanisms required to ensure safe utilisation of all health care workers to effectively meet the health needs of the New Zealand population. There will be no legislative, contractual or funding barriers to practice because people will recognise the value of nursing in improving health outcomes and addressing health inequalities and will work with

nursing to remove these barriers. Nurse practitioners, registered nurses and enrolled nurses will work collaboratively to ensure the best possible health outcomes for all New Zealanders. Nurse practitioners will be widely recognised as an integral part of the health system and nurse practitioners and registered nurses will provide first point of contact care for many New Zealanders in a range of health settings. Nursing will work closely with those bodies charged with workforce planning to ensure nursing shortages do not occur and that appropriate and ethical recruitment and retention strategies are implemented.

Innovative and flexible [models of care](#) that are person-centred will be developed and evaluated by nurses. Technology, enhanced communication, and new treatment modalities will be utilised to ensure that models of care are appropriate, cost effective and meet the needs of all people. People will be consulted about the models that best meet their needs and nurses will work collaboratively with other health professionals to meet these needs. The principles of whakawhanaungatanga, manaakitanga, rangatiratanga, and wairuatanga will continue to guide professional nursing practice. While acute hospital care will always be required, the development of models of care that focus on people's, family whānau and community strengths will mean that those needing support will have this available when and where they need it from the most appropriate person. Those experiencing the effects of chronic or life-long conditions will manage their conditions at home with support from family whānau and nurses where needed. If acute care is required, this will be a seamless experience with overall management of the person's care being undertaken by a specialist nurse across the primary-secondary-tertiary continuum in liaison with other health professionals. Nurses will be the case managers of care using their expertise in building effective relationships with people to guide them through their health experiences. Fully-funded nurse-led clinics will be a first point of call for people seeking support to manage their health needs. Nurse practitioners and nurse specialists will be the key health practitioners in a range of settings but particularly in the older adult care sector where they will provide specialist nursing care to clusters of residential facilities while supporting registered and enrolled nurses and health care assistants to provide expert care on a daily basis. Nurses will demonstrate that they are achieving intended population health outcomes through evidence-based research. Nurses will continue to be respected clinical leaders whose advice is sought consistently, and subsequently actioned.

Demands on nurses to be actively involved in research, to develop and integrate new technology and treatment modalities to meet health needs, and to develop, implement and evaluate new models of care are increasing. [Nursing education](#) will proactively prepare nurses to meet these challenges and the changing health needs of New Zealanders, implementing a greater curriculum focus on primary health care approaches to health care across the continuum. Recruitment in to the profession will aim to reflect the diversity of New Zealand's population. Interprofessional bachelor's level education will be based on a partnership model that integrates clinical practice with academic learning. Formal collaboration and partnership among and between nursing education providers and clinical environments based around a fundamental framework of nursing education will see all nursing programmes including Māori and Pasifika programmes consistently create graduates with the clinical and academic skills required to meet people's diverse health and cultural needs. Following the final year of their degree, all new graduate nurses will complete a fully funded transition period designed to support their transition to practice. By 2020 New Zealand will educate sufficient nurses to meet workforce requirements. New Zealand nursing qualifications will set the benchmark internationally and the qualification will become fully portable worldwide. Lifelong learning will be recognised as fundamental to nursing practice and all registered nurses and nurse

practitioners will have access to a range of flexible, appropriate, affordable, acceptable, relevant, and employer supported professional development opportunities. Similarly supported post graduate education opportunities will prepare nurses to take up advanced and specialist positions clinically, in research, in education, in leadership, in management and in education. Advice on career and academic planning will be available to all nurses. Nurses who take up academic positions will be remunerated appropriately and will be fully supported to focus on research and/or clinical practice as part of their teaching roles. All registered nurses and nurse practitioners will have access to up-to-date information technology in their workplaces to support evidence based practice. Enrolled nurses will have access to professional development and post enrolment education that ensures they are able to meet the needs of the people they nurse. Enrolled nurses will also be formally recognised for the post enrolment education they undertake. Structured pathways from health care assistant to enrolled nurse to registered nurse to nurse practitioner will exist that recognise prior learning.

By 2020, all health care settings will have incorporated the principles of [healthy workplaces](#) and safe staffing and New Zealand will have the best and most equitable health outcomes for people in the world. All people will recognise the value of nursing, and the common platform of improving health outcomes and addressing health inequalities will be the basis for development of the profession, uniting the professional and industrial endeavours of nurses. While political change will continue to impact on the provision of quality healthcare, nursing as a profession will stay committed to its defining values. The combination of safe staffing, healthy workplaces, competitive salaries, quality practice, job satisfaction, professional career pathways, and culturally appropriate support for Māori and Pasifika nurses makes nursing one of the most attractive professions in New Zealand and nursing becomes the career of choice for young people by the end of 2020.