

Redeployment/Relocation of Midwives – Variance Response

Purpose

This statement outlines NZNO's position on midwives working in areas outside a maternity setting, as part of a Care Capacity Demand Management variance response strategy.

Statement

NZNO is aware midwives have been approached to work in areas outside a maternity setting as part of a variance response strategy. The Midwifery Council is clear that this places both midwives and the public at risk.

“Midwives have a gazetted scope of practice. To require them to work in areas outside of the maternity area means they would be working outside of their scope of practice. This is a public safety matter and a risk for a DHB. Scope of practice is defined in the [Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (HPCA)] Act. The Midwifery Council is concerned that the movement of staff at random focuses on clinicians undertaking “tasks” rather than providing holistic high quality care that they are educated to provide.

There are questions that arise around obligations and the individual's position should an incident arise. If an incident did occur, the midwife would be required to answer to the Council and perhaps other bodies about why she was engaged in these activities and why on the face of it she was working outside of her regulated scope.”

Sue Calvert – Midwifery Advisor, Midwifery Council August 2014

Where midwives hold dual registered midwife and registered nurse (RM/RN) registration, but only hold a current annual practising certificate (APC) for midwifery, they cannot work as a nurse. They do not hold a current practising certificate for nursing and would therefore be practising nursing without an APC if asked to work in a nursing role. This would constitute a breach of the requirement of the HPCA Act (2003).

If the midwife also holds a current nursing APC, then NZNO recommends they work in neonatal or women's health services where there is some crossover of scope. If a RM/RN is asked to work in other acute adult services, NZNO recommends they work in partnership with another RN and that they are provided with orientation to the area. NB – even if working in partnership with another RN, they are accountable for their knowledge, actions and practice. The midwife must be available to return to the maternity unit, if required.

When a midwife holds both midwifery and nursing APCs while being employed as a midwife, they need to maintain their competence in both professions separately, and understand the different requirements and expectations of both professions.

Further information

NZNO Publication Relocation with a DHB:

<http://www.nzno.org.nz/Portals/0/publications/Relocation%20within%20a%20DHB,%202014.pdf>

NZNO Care Rationing Position Statement:

<http://www.nzno.org.nz/Portals/0/publications/NZNO%20Position%20Statement%20on%20Care%20Rationing,%202014.pdf>

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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.

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