



New Zealand Nurses Organisation

**Submission to the
Working Group for achieving quality in
emergency departments to the Minister of
Health**

on the

**Recommendations to improve quality and
the measurement of quality in NZ emergency
departments.**

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SUMMARY

1. The New Zealand Nurses Organisation welcomes this opportunity to comment on this report and congratulates the working group for addressing this important issue.
2. Recommendations in the paper address the common issues experienced in emergency departments. Emergency Nurses in NZ have identified key elements required to ensure safety in the ED. These include a safe environment, staff experienced in emergency nursing, ensuring adequate skill mix, education preparedness and the time to deliver evidenced based care.
3. NZNO strongly recommends improvements to the emergency nursing workforce and strengthen advanced nursing roles in the emergency department. Our participation in future design is crucial.
4. NZNO strongly supports improving quality and ensuring patient safety in the Emergency Department.
5. NZNO draws attention to the working group and the Minister of Health the recommendations of the NZNO and DHB Report of the Safe Staffing / Healthy Workplaces Committee of Inquiry 2006. The Safe Staffing and Healthy Workplaces Unit are implementing the recommendations of Committee of Inquiry – ratified by DHB CEO's group. These would be an appropriate foundation for ensuring quality in emergency departments.
6. NZNO is the leading professional body and nursing union in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing over 41 000 nurses, midwives, kaimahi hauora, students, health care assistants and other health professionals who constitute a significant part of the modern healthcare team.

DISCUSSION

7. The Ministry of Health have indicated a need to review the ED service specifications. NZNO believes this requires consultation with emergency nurses and representation via the College of Emergency Nurses NZ – NZNO. NZNO will be actively engaging with the MoH and seeking participation on this crucial ED Service Specification review. **(Working group recommendation 7)**

8. NZNO believes that the facilitation and implementation of advanced emergency nursing roles are essential in NZ emergency departments. College of Emergency Nurses NZ^{NZNO} (CENNZ) have outlined educational preparedness and staffing models for emergency nursing. Although there are, only two emergency care nurse practitioners in New Zealand, advanced nursing roles have been and continue to be developed in emergency departments throughout New Zealand. It is NZNO's belief that these initiatives already contributing to quality emergency care. Advanced Nursing Practice roles, including Nurse Practitioner roles, should continue to be developed and supported **(Working group recommendation 12)**
9. Recommendations need to complement the full capacity plans, escalation processes and the need to ensure staff can fulfil their obligations to identify the limits of safe practice. Impact upon other services such as inpatient areas must be addressed and work in conjunction with this initiative. A whole of hospital collaborative approach is required. **(Working group recommendation 4)**
10. NZNO **agrees** with setting quality targets in the ED that improve patient safety and the need for DHB executives to be actively engaged in the effectiveness of emergency departments. There is concern that the subsequent actions required will not improve patient safety if the patients are transferred from an un-resourced corridor space in the ED to an equally un-resourced informal space in the inpatient service. This shift from one inappropriate space to another continues to undermine patient safety and health professionals obligations **(Working group recommendation 1)**
11. NZNO **agrees** that the Ministry of Health allocate resources within the ministry to focus on emergency department issues and implementation of these recommendations. It would not be enough for the ministry to facilitate networks or best practice ideas but must lead this work. **(Working group recommendation 6)**
12. NZNO **support** reporting measurements in emergency departments to capture the data set required by the MoH. Support the initiative to improve patient safety and quality in the ED. We **recommend** engagement with NZNO in each DHB to work through the issues that may emerge with this implementation of the working group's recommendations. **(Working group recommendation 7)**

13. NZNO **disagrees** with the working party on workforce growth comments (p 17). Far from being “undetermined” is patently clear that there has been no growth. Looking at the data provided by the Health Workforce Information Programme, we could see no increase of Registered Nurses employed in the ED for the past 3 years. The burden described by the working party of overwhelming demand and increasing length of stay of patients waiting for inpatient services is in the whole a burden mostly experienced by the emergency nursing staff. It would be **misleading** of the working party to give the impression to the Minister of Health that the workforce has matched demand. A true reflection of the current workforce data is required.
14. District Health Boards and NZNO multi-employer collective agreement (1 April 2007-31 March 2010) outlines an escalation process (Clause 6) for when limits of safe practice are identified. This requires executive management within DHBs to provide resources to ensure patient safety. **(Working group recommendation 4)**
15. CENNZ received a clear mandate from their 2008 Annual General Meeting and Conference that Triage was the preferred method of initial assessment to determine urgency and severity. The concept of streaming is a secondary event after triage and if implemented this process would require an education strategy for emergency nurses and other interested clinicians. **(Working group recommendation 7)**
16. NZNO **agrees** that building of new or remodelling of existing emergency departments are designed in light of best practice. It is crucial that emergency nurses participate in these activities.

CONCLUSION

17. In conclusion, NZNO recommends that you:
 - **note** our strong support for this proposal in regards to improving quality in the ED.
 - **note** that MoH allocate resources to implement these recommendations.
 - **note** the afterhours discussion paper released by MoH on the 27th November regarding nursing’s role afterhours primary care services may influence outcomes.

- **note** our comments on emergency nursing workforce development and a the need to expand advanced nursing roles in NZ emergency departments.
- **note** our previous submissions regarding emergency department issues to District Health Boards NZ June 2008 and draws this to the attention of the working party (attached).

ABOUT THE NEW ZEALAND NURSES ORGANISATION

18. NZNO is a Te Tiriti o Waitangi based organisation. It is the leading professional body and nursing union in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing over 41 000 nurses, midwives, kaimahi hauora, students, health care assistants and other health professionals. Te Runanga o Aotearoa NZNO comprises Māori membership and is the arm through which our Treaty based partnership is articulated.

19. The NZNO vision is “Freed to care, Proud to nurse”. Our members enhance the health and wellbeing of all people of Aotearoa New Zealand through ethically based partnerships. Our members are united in the achievement of their professional and industrial aspirations.

References

Safe Staffing Healthy Workplace Committee of Inquiry (2006). Report of the Safe Staffing Healthy Workplace Committee of Inquiry. Wellington: Author. Retrieved 14 November 2008, from <http://www.nzno.org.nz/Site/Campaigns/safestaffing.aspx>.