



College of Emergency Nursing New Zealand CENNZ-NZNO

Letter from the Chair

2/5/20

Moving onto the next phase

We are all grateful that circumstances have allowed us to reach a point where we are moving back to a situation closer to normality. The reality for emergency care is that this normality is unlikely to be the same as the world of emergency nursing we experienced prior to lockdown and prior to the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic. While NZ has been fortunate to escape the extremes of impact we have seen overseas, we are not unaffected, nor can we expect to go back to 'business as usual' without tacking on board the very real lessons we have learned, and are continuing to learn.

This remains a time when healthcare workers need to be mindful of the impact of this experience, both in terms of the physical, psychological and professional aspects of our practice. We need to continue to build on this, and to speak out as necessary, to ensure that we are prepared for what ever comes in the future. There are no guarantees that we are past the danger stage in this event, we need to continue to advise, role model and highlight the issues of significance as we have been doing. We need to acknowledge the stress and potential concerns for our colleagues facing different challenges across the country.

Areas of concern that the college is seeking to address include:

- The widespread variation in advice, policy and protocols that have emerged during this response, and the resulting distress this has caused to staff
- The importance of recognising the need to have consistent and evidence based use of PPE and recognition of the harm caused by variation in practices and the difficulty challenging this
- Failure to include the voice of nurses in the government select committee and its decision making processes
- The need for clearer ethical, regulatory and professional guidance around the implications of changes to scope in the event of catastrophic overwhelming of health services

Some positive elements will emerge for NZ emergency nurses, and we need to also look to these, and how we can share the innovations and embed the positives into continuing practice post Covid-19. From the perspective of the college, we are pleased to identify the following:

- Establishment of regular online CNM meetings to enable comparison and discussion of regional issues around the pandemic responses
- Collaboration and joint engagement with the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine
- Joint development of core issues and associated press releases with the NZ College of Critical Care Nurses

We are continuing to address ongoing issues, but we are moving forward, and this is an opportunity to strengthen and highlight all that we do

Kia kaha

Sandy