

Hon Peter Dunne

Associate Minister of Health



17 June 2015

Speech

Address to the New Zealand Nurses Organisation “Positively Enrolled” Forum

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to your conference.

I am very happy to be here, among so many from one of New Zealand's, and the world's, most trusted professions, and to participate alongside such an experienced group of panellists in this session.

Although my portfolio responsibilities do not directly extend to nursing, it is a profession I have long admired and I am grateful for the opportunity to participate today. Like other developed countries New Zealand faces a number of challenges to our health care system now and into the future. Our population and our workforce are aging.

There are inequities in health outcomes for some groups of New Zealanders. Chronic conditions and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and mental health conditions are increasing. Throughout our term in office, the Government has responded to the recommendations of the 2009 Ministerial Review Group which concluded it is important to move away from hospital-based models of care, rigid job descriptions and work practices.

Over the last six years our priority has been to shift services in the health care system so that more care is provided as close to home as possible. Personally, I have long been an advocate of expanding, where appropriate, the roles and responsibilities of our health workforce to ensure we are getting the most out of our skilled and dedicated healthcare professionals.

A key pillar of our future approach is and will continue to be New Zealand Health Strategy, which is currently being updated by the Ministry of Health.

Two significant reviews are being undertaken alongside and as part of this refresh process, namely:

- A review of health system **funding** to support a high quality health sector that is integrated and sustainable in the long term.
- A review of health system **capability and capacity** to ensure an adaptable and responsive health and disability sector able to support the updated strategy.

Our vision for the delivery of services is that New Zealanders receive the care they need, when they need it, from the right person and in the right place.

More and more often the right place is in people's homes, including those older people whose home is a retirement village or rest home. Due to our aging health workforce, ensuring we have a sustainable health workforce with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the health needs of our population is a priority for the Government.

Health practitioners with generic skills are needed to increase the flexibility of the workforce and to support integration and the increasing shift towards primary and community based care. Another response to future challenges is to encourage health practitioners to take on new tasks and responsibilities within their scopes of practice, making the most of practitioners' capability.

Health workforce

Our health workforce contributes to the health outcomes of New Zealanders across a continuum of careers and career pathways. There is a place for all health practitioners, regulated and non-regulated, working together in the health care of New Zealanders. Careerforce and Health Workforce New Zealand are working together to develop a workforce action plan that will focus on the development of the health and disability Kaiāwhina/non-regulated workforce.

The health workforce will increasingly be based in settings outside of hospitals. The health workforce will be enabled to provide quality care through good clinical leadership, working effectively in multi-disciplinary teams, professional development, using technology and meeting consumers' expectations.

Nursing Workforce

The nursing workforce is a very important group in contributing to improving the health of New Zealanders.

Nurses in all three scopes of practice including enrolled nurses are accessible, trusted and skilled members of health care teams, in hospitals and in communities.

Enrolled Nurses

The generalist training and scope of practice of enrolled nurses means you are well placed to assist people to live well, stay well and get well.

As regulated practitioners you are professionally accountable for the care you provide.

When enrolled nurses work with nurse practitioners, registered nurses, healthcare assistants and or other clinicians in the health care team you contribute to safe, high quality care and improved productivity. Enrolled nurses can work across a range of settings in the community, in peoples' homes, in aged care, in mental health and in acute care settings.

Most recent data from Nursing Council New Zealand shows that you are working across all nursing practice areas but predominantly in health of older people. Enrolled nurses have an especially important role to play in health of older people where they have traditionally worked providing essential care to our older people. Enrolled nurses are supported by education and knowledge of daily wellness activities such as mobility, nutrition, skin care and hydration.

Enrolled nurses and InterRAI

You may have heard of the pilot study where three small groups of enrolled nurses participated in training to administer the InterRAI assessment tool in aged residential care facilities.

The aim of the pilot was to assess the InterRAI training needs of enrolled nurses compared to registered nurses and to understand the way enrolled nurses' skills and knowledge can contribute to the assessment and care planning of older people. I am told the pilot went well and the outcomes of the pilot are being evaluated.

If successful; enrolled nurses may take a more active role in InterRai assessments in the community and aged care facilities in future.

Enrolled nurse employment

In the last year there have been small increases in numbers of enrolled nurses working in district nursing and primary health care.

This could be a sign that a broader range of providers are developing roles for enrolled nurses.

In 2010, the Government supported the re-introduction of enrolled nurse education. The Ministry of Health is working with district health board Directors of Nursing and the heads of schools of nursing to strengthen the recruitment and retention of enrolled nurses.

Although there is some variability in uptake of enrolled nurses across the country Canterbury and Southern district health boards, in particular, have been working to recruit, support and incorporate enrolled nurses into their models of care.

Regional initiatives

Southern district health board is systematically recruiting new graduate enrolled nurses across a range of settings including acute inpatient units and as Needs Assessors in Care Co-ordination.

They are working closely with their tertiary education providers to make recruitment a seamless process.

They have a supported orientation programme for new graduate enrolled nurses including joint training with new graduate registered nurses, and intravenous and medications management. The majority of enrolled nurses in Canterbury DHBs who trained under the hospital system have transitioned to the new scope of practice.

Canterbury district health board employs enrolled nurses across the health system including rehabilitation, older peoples' health, district nursing and particularly specialist mental health services. I am advised enrolled nurses have been valuable additions to health teams in Canterbury DHBs and are involved in many aspects of care including providing education and health promotion to consumers and their family/whanau, physical and mental health assessments.

These are examples that other DHBs could learn from. The level of New Zealanders health need varies and it makes sense to have regulated nurses in three levels of practice working together to offer a differentiated response to levels of health need.

In closing I congratulate you on the start of your conference, I hope the coming days offer you opportunities for learning and fellowship, thank you again for inviting me here today.