

The place of enrolled nurses in the New Zealand health care system

Purpose

This position statement sets out NZNO's commitment to enrolled nurses and their place within the wider health care team.

Background

The history of enrolled nursing since 2000 has been a chequered one. But a consistent theme has been NZNO's support for a second-level nursing workforce, with appropriate educational preparation, an enabling scope of practice and a guaranteed place in the nursing workforce skill mix. (NZNO, 2011.)

ENs make up a significant part of the regulated nursing workforce, with 3239 ENs working in a variety of practice areas. (NCNZ, 2010a). Approximately 2000 ENs are NZNO members, with the NZNO EN Section (the section) having 1100 members.

Rationale

The new EN scope of practice (see below) enables ENs to work in a broader range of practice settings under the direction and delegation of a registered nurse (RN). It will result in new models of care and skill mixes within the health workforce. It is essential employers, RNs and ENs themselves understand the implications of the new scope of practice. As regulated health professionals under the Health Practitioner Competence Assurance (HPCA) Act, ENs must understand their scope of practice.

Enrolled nurses practise under the direction and delegation of a registered nurse or nurse practitioner to deliver nursing care and health education across the life span to health consumers in community, residential or hospital settings. Enrolled nurses contribute to nursing assessments; care planning, implementation and evaluation of care for health consumers and/ or families/whānau. The registered nurse maintains overall responsibility for the plan of care. Enrolled nurses assist health consumers with the activities of daily living, observe changes in health consumers' conditions and report these to the registered nurse, administer medicines and undertake other nursing care responsibilities appropriate to their assessed competence.

In acute settings, enrolled nurses must work in a team with a registered nurse who is responsible for directing and delegating nursing interventions. In some settings, enrolled nurses may coordinate a team of health care assistants under the direction and delegation of a registered nurse. In some settings, enrolled nurses may work under the direction and delegation of a registered health practitioner. In these situations the enrolled nurse must have registered nurse supervision and must not assume overall responsibility for nursing assessment or care planning. Enrolled nurses are accountable for their nursing actions and practise competently in*

accordance with legislation, to their level of knowledge and experience. They work in partnership with health consumers, families/whānau and multidisciplinary teams.

Implementing the new EN scope of practice is part of New Zealand's future workforce strategy (DHBNZ, 2009).

Principles

NZNO believes ENs are an integral part of the health workforce and are the key workforce support to the RN.

NZNO believes the new EN scope of practice clearly delineates the boundaries between the work of regulated and unregulated health care assistants (HCA)

NZNO believes the 18-month diploma of EN nursing at level 5 on the New Zealand Qualifications Authority framework, clearly delineates between the educational preparation required for ENs and that required for unregulated HCAs (NZNO, 2009).

NZNO believes ENs should be enabled to practise to the full extent of their new, broadened scope of practice, including the administration of medications and working in mental health.

NZNO believes employers and nursing leaders have a key role in ensuring ENs are able to practise to the full extent of their new scope of practice.

NZNO believes nursing teams must match skill mix to patient health need.

NZNO believes the seven elements of safe staffing and healthy workplaces must serve as the guiding principles for patient safety.

NZNO believes that to ensure a sustainable EN workforce, a number of supports are needed. These include a programme to mentor new ENs into the workplace, an ability for ENs to be employed in a range of practice settings and the provision of post-registration education.

Conclusion

NZNO believes ENs are an essential part of the nursing workforce now and into the future. The new broadened scope of practice and the diploma of enrolled nursing which supports it, will improve patient/client outcomes and enhance patient safety.

References

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Correspondence to: nurses@nzno.org.nz

Principal author: Teresa O'Connor, NZNO.

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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Position Statement

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New Zealand Nurses Organisation PO Box 2128, Wellington 6140. www.nzno.org.nz