

The NSW Nurses' Association – Working to Secure a Future for Nurses and Midwives

Background

A National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professionals has been established. The key purpose of the national registration scheme is to protect public safety. Only health practitioners who are suitably educated and able to demonstrate that they are qualified to practise their profession in a competent and ethical manner are registered.

Each profession has one National Board setting standards and policies for each of the 10 health professions supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). For nursing and midwifery the National Board is the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (the Board).

There are now 5 mandatory standards that must be met in order to register. Among these is the new recency of practice standard.

The requirement to demonstrate recency of practice in order to register is new to nurses and midwives in NSW. Prior to the introduction of this new system, nurses and midwives seeking to return to the register could apply to the Nurses and Midwives Board of NSW (NMB) and, at the discretion of the NMB, they were integrated into the workforce through a period of paid, supervised employment.

Under the new system, nurses and midwives will meet the recency of practice standard if they can demonstrate one of the following:

- a. practice in their profession within the past five years for a period equivalent to a minimum of three months full time;
- b. successful completion of a program or assessment approved by the Board, or
- c. successful completion of a supervised practice experience approved by the Board.



NSW NURSES' ASSOCIATION

50 O'Dea Ave, Waterloo NSW 2017

Tel: 1300 367 962 | Fax: (02) 9662 1414

Authorised by B.Holmes, General Secretary, NSWNA

This new recency of practice standard is being retrospectively applied. This means that many nurses and midwives who have taken extended breaks from their professions under the previous regulatory regime do not meet the new requirements.

The main option for nurses seeking to re-enter practice in NSW is an 8 week course in Sydney at the cost of \$10,000. The cost is prohibitive and few if any regional or rural nurses have access to this option.

For midwives there is no accredited course available in NSW.

The option of a supervised practice experience approved by the Board has been granted to only a small number of applicants.

The requirement that health professionals demonstrate some recency of practice in order to maintain competency and their registration is supported. However, the barriers that now confront a small cohort of nurses and midwives who have taken breaks from their professions under the previous arrangements and are now seeking to re-enter are impractical and inefficient and serve merely to deny the health system experienced health professionals.

SUBMITTING THE PETITION

Please bear in mind that in order for the signatures collected to be admissible to the legislative assembly, certain rules must be followed:

- Each page of signatures must be headed with the words of the request.
- Every signature must be original hand-writing, and signatures must not be pasted on, photocopied or transferred in any other way.
- The petition must be signed by the people whose names are listed, using their own signature or mark if they are unable to write. Every person signing a petition must write their address after their signature.

Once the petition has been filled out, please return the original petitions to the NSW Nurses Association: Attn: Lisa Kremmer, Acting Assistant General Secretary, 50 O'Dea Ave. Waterloo. NSW 2017 by **March 31 2012**.



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PETITION

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales.

The Petition of citizens of NSW brings to the attention of the House a significant threat to the provision of safe patient care in the NSW public health system and other facilities that provide nursing care arising from retrospective application of new barriers to the registration of nurses and midwives under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, specifically the new Recency of Practice Standard and the lack of affordable and accessible re-entry to practice courses for nurses and midwives who cannot meet the Standard.

For nurses who are now unable to register due to the new recency of practice standard, there is only one re-entry to practice course accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Australia. The cost of this 8 week course is exorbitant and prohibitive for most nurses. It is available through one provider in metropolitan Sydney, effectively excluding nurses in regional and rural areas of NSW.

For midwives who are unable to meet the new Recency of Practice Standard, there is no accredited re-entry to practice course available in NSW, the closest being offered in Adelaide.

The undersigned petitioners therefore ask the Legislative Assembly to immediately release funding to increase the number of nurses completing the College of Nursing course and to develop additional courses accredited by Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council for delivery by Local health Districts.

| Name | Address | Signature |
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