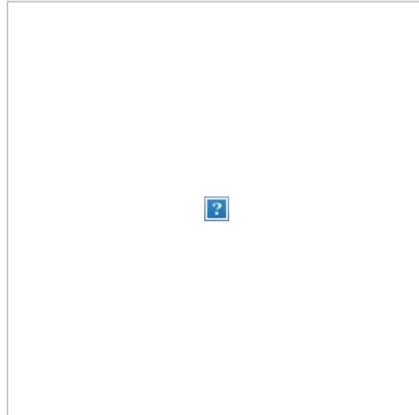


**From:** [Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer](#)  
**To:** [Anastasia Shianis](#)  
**Subject:** Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Newsletter - July 2022  
**Date:** Monday, 18 July 2022 3:30:37 PM

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## Message from the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer

Dear Nurses and Midwives

I write to you from Ngunawal Country where I am appreciating the benefits of puffer jackets! It was a very crisp -6 degrees when I did bootcamp this morning.

Firstly, I wish to warmly welcome our Ministers who will be leading the Health and Aged Care portfolio:

Minister for Health and Aged Care - The Hon Mark Butler MP

Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care - The Hon Ged Kearney MP

Minister for Aged Care and Sport - The Hon Anika Wells MP

Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Rural and Regional Health - The Hon Emma McBride MP

Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health - Senator Malarndirri McCarthy

I am looking forward to working with the Ministers to support the nursing and midwifery workforce, and improve the health and wellbeing of Australians now, and into the future.

We are halfway through the year and 2022 has already become another significant year for the nursing and midwifery workforce, continuing, for many of us, professional and personal trials. Since December last year, we have seen the Omicron

variant arrive and peak in all states and territories, a volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga, the devastating floods in QLD and NSW, and the confronting and distressing events in Ukraine. Many of these events affecting the people and communities we live and work in.

What I know from my nursing career is that life will continue to bring challenges but through collaboration and support we continue to develop, and innovate, to address the existing and new challenges for our professions. I mention this in each newsletter, but I can't under-emphasise the supports that are available to you for your health and well-being. I encourage you to seek support, early and regularly. Keep reading on to find the links to services to support you. There is no shame in reaching out for help. It is a strength, and I myself have used these services on a regular basis. I can reassure you they are confidential and can help in many ways.

When I wrote to you in December 2021, I invited you to provide input to the public consultation to inform development of the Nurse Practitioner 10-Year Plan (the Plan). Thank you to those who contributed. The consultation had a broad reach with almost 500 responses received. In addition, we held two consumer focus groups and three Yarning Circles to increase engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector. These consultations were invaluable in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the workforce issues of national significance for nurse practitioners and ideas on opportunities to address there. Since that time, consultation has continued to help build the objectives of the Plan, refine the list of suggested actions received through the consultations, and assess potential activities for feasibility of implementation, cost and timeliness. Further stakeholder input will be sought later this year on the draft Plan.

In December I also noted the development of a National Nursing Workforce Strategy. The Department is looking to work formally with states and territories to develop a national-level strategy that supports the ongoing development of the profession now and into the future. I will keep you updated with progress on its development, and when public consultation opens, I invite you to contribute your views.

Across the world, in May, we celebrated the contributions of Midwives and Nurses to the health and wellbeing of our communities.

The International Day of the Midwife on 5 May, is a time set aside to reflect on the work of midwives. Australia's midwives provide support and care during pregnancy, labour and birth across our nation. You are a significant part of

our healthcare system and your contribution to helping people in need is nothing short of remarkable.

A key acknowledgment on this day is the one-hundred-year anniversary of the International Confederation of Midwives. This global organisation currently includes 140 midwives' associations in more than 120 countries, reflecting midwives' worldwide and the rights and health of women and their families.

A week later, on Thursday 12 May, International Nurses Day is a time to celebrate, pause, and reflect on the work of nurses, particularly during COVID.

The work of Australia's aged care nurses, especially during the pandemic, has been especially challenging. Aged care nurses are often the unsung heroes of the nursing workforce. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's Final Report highlighted the critical role aged care nurses play in keeping our older Australians safe during the pandemic.

As Australia's population ages, they're caring for patients with increasingly complex care needs, while also holding an important leadership position within their organisations. This dedication has earned nurses huge respect from the community.

These days of significance are a time to celebrate and reflect on the work of midwives and nurses, especially during COVID. Australia's nurses and midwives are the backbone of our healthcare system and their contribution to helping people in need is nothing short of remarkable.

Throughout the past two years, I have seen exceptional demonstrations of leadership and commitment from the nursing and midwifery professions. Many nurses and midwives are pursuing opportunities and growing substantially within their careers, and there are countless examples of innovative solutions to complex problems. For all the hardship the past 2 years have brought, we must continue to positively foster this professional growth.

On Tuesday 10 May, I had the privilege of attending the Annual Nurses and Midwives Remembrance and Thanksgiving Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial Canberra, to pay tribute to the nurses and midwives who have served our country, many of whom lost their lives during their service.



Adjunct Professor Alison McMillan, PSM, Commonwealth Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer with Mr Anthony Dombkins, ACT Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer.

Winter is well and truly here now, and we can see this in the rise of COVID-19 and Influenza cases across the country. We all know to protect yourselves and your loved one's best is to stay home when unwell and to receive your COVID-19 and Flu vaccinations. I urge you all, when possible, to please get your Flu and COVID vaccinations and boosters. A fourth COVID booster is now available to anyone 30 years and older and both vaccinations are safe to receive at the same time.

Please take care of yourselves and look out for others. Thank you again for all the work you do to keep Australians, and each other, safe and well.

Thank you



Professor (Practice) Alison J McMillan PSM

Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer

## Other news

Midwives and Nurses recognised in Australia Day and Queens Birthday Lists:

It is wonderful to see so many midwives and nurses recognised in the honour rolls.

**MEMBER (AM) IN THE GENERAL DIVISION OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA**

Ms Michele RUMSEY

Ms Mary (Maria) SAID

Mrs Lesley SALEM

Ms Kathleen Mary SLOANE

**MEDAL (OAM) OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA IN  
THE GENERAL DIVISION**

Mrs Wendy Leeanne HELLEBRAND

Ms Jennifer Mary JONES

Ms Therese Anne LEE

Mr Victor Mannin McCONVEY

Mrs Shillar SIBANDA

Dr Karolyn VAUGHAN

**PUBLIC SERVICE MEDAL (PSM)**

Ms Paula Maree DUFFY

Ms Caroline FARMER

Mrs Vicki Anne SIMPSON

For more detail on these worthy recipients, see the Governor General's [Australian Honours and Awards](#).

COVID-19

To keep up to date on all the latest COVID-19 information below are useful links:

[COVID-19 vaccines](#)

[Compulsory accredited training for the COVID-19 vaccination workforce](#)

[ATAGI recommendations on the use of a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine](#)

[ATAGI shared decision-making guide for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning pregnancy](#)

Boosters can be booked through the [Vaccine Clinic Finder](#)

[AHPRA Pandemic response sub-registers](#)

Winter Preparedness

“Winter is Coming.” Just a few years ago, that was a pop culture reference. This year, it was a clarion call for all of us to be ready for a unique challenge – the co-circulation of COVID-19 and of influenza in the current winter season. We all

have our individual roles to play. First and foremost, I'm sure by now you have all taken the opportunity to have your flu vaccination. This, along with having your booster for COVID-19, will give you the best available protection against contracting either flu or COVID-19. A fourth COVID-19 booster is now available to anyone 30 years and older. . If you do contract COVID-19, being up to date with your vaccines will help protect you against severe symptoms. Second, we can all help spread the word: stay home when you're sick. For a long time, Australians had a "soldier on" approach to the flu. Now, we want to encourage everyone to think differently. Staying at home when you have respiratory symptoms – even if you tested negative for COVID-19 – can help limit the spread of both COVID-19 and the flu. As health care professionals, we can encourage our patients to consider their loved ones, co-workers, and neighbours this flu season, even with the changes in isolation. Flu can make some people very sick, and even as many people develop "pandemic fatigue," we need to encourage and foster that continued sense of community spirit this winter.

Finally, in our workplaces, we can refresh our understanding of the hierarchy of infection prevention and control (IPC) measures. Good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and the appropriate use of PPE are all as important now as they ever were. The more we can maintain IPC, the more we can safely provide face to face health care services to Australians who need it. Below are links to find out more.

#### [Winter preparedness health measures](#)

##### [Influenza vaccine](#)

#### Wellbeing for Nurses and Midwives

The pandemic has placed nurses and midwives under an unprecedented level of additional stress, in a context where healthcare workers were already struggling with major work-related challenges including anxiety, depression, compassion fatigue and burnout.

However, despite the huge pressure we have seen during the pandemic, and the wide range of support services directly available to health professionals, I am still hearing reports of low uptake of these services.

There are a number of resources available to support the mental health of the health workforce when they feel they need it. For example, the Black Dog Institute's The Essential Network (TEN) provides a blended care mental health support service for healthcare workers that offers specialist, individualised mental health advice. You can find out more about this service

by visiting the Black Dog Institute's [website](#).

The Department of Health has also funded initiatives to embed mental health skills in the broader health workforce. Resources such as the Mental Health Professional's Network (MHPN) supports the health workforce through delivery of professional multidisciplinary and intra-professional networks and online development programs and webinars for health and mental health practitioners – such as mental health nurses and special interest groups – who support people with or at risk of mental illness. This includes a number of webinars focussing on maintaining and caring for your mental health and wellbeing while working in healthcare setting. Visit the MHPN [website](#) for more information and easy to navigate links to podcasts, online forums and a range of other useful resources.

Nurses and midwives can also access digital mental health services available to the broader community by visiting [headtohealth.gov.au](#). These services are free or low cost, and cover a range of counselling, treatment and crisis support services.

There is no shame in reaching out for help. It is a strength, and I myself have used these services on a regular basis. I can reassure you they are confidential and can help in many ways. If you or anyone you know is struggling, do reach out to the support there especially for you.

### **Expansion of the Aged Care Transition to Practice Program**

The Aged Care Transition to Practice (ACTTP) Program has expanded. It now offers streams for newly graduated enrolled nurses, and experienced registered nurses who are new to the aged care sector.

Newly graduated registered nurses continue to be eligible for the program.

The ACTTP Program supports new aged care nurses with mentorship and training. To date over 400 nurses have commenced the program.

Read more information, including how to participate in the ACTTP Program, on the department's [website](#).

### **Changes to participating midwives' Medicare Benefit Schedule (MBS) items**

On 1 March 2022, changes were made to participating midwives' Medicare Benefit Schedule (MBS) items. The changes are a result of the [MBS Review Taskforce recommendations](#) and extensive consultation with stakeholders.

These changes apply to intrapartum items, maternity care plans and minor wording changes to postnatal attendance items.

More information on these changes, including frequently asked questions, can be found at [MBS online](#) under 'Fact Sheets.'

## **Collaborative Arrangements Review**

The department has commissioned an independent review of collaborative arrangements for participating midwives and nurse practitioners. The review will provide greater clarity on the efficacy of collaborative arrangements and highlight any unintended barriers. The review will be conducted through stakeholder consultation and a comprehensive review of Australian and international research literature.

Consultation has commenced, comprising invitations to representative organisations to participate in interviews, focus groups, and to disseminate an online survey to members.

The findings of the review will inform future policy settings on collaborative arrangements.

## **Collaborative Arrangements Legislation**

The National Health (Collaborative arrangements for midwives) Determination 2010, National Health (Collaborative arrangements for nurse practitioners) Determination 2010 and National Health (Eligible midwives) Determination 2010 will sunset on 30 September 2022. These determinations provide the legislative basis for Nurse Practitioners and Participating Midwives to claim for relevant Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items and grants them authority to write prescriptions working within a collaborative arrangement. To ensure that Nurse Practitioners and Participating Midwives can continue the important work that they do, the Department will renew the three determinations as an interim measure. This will allow the independent review of collaborative arrangements to be completed so that a considered policy decision can be made on the future of collaborative arrangements.

## **The Nursing in Primary Health Care Program**

The Government extended the Australian Primary Health Care Nursing Association's (APNA) funding for an additional 12 months to deliver the Nursing in Primary Health Care (NiPHC) Program. The \$10 million funded NiPHC program that supports reform and innovation initiatives in the primary health care nursing workforce, provides a Transition to Practice Program for new

graduates and experienced nurses to transition to primary health care settings; building nurse capacity clinics; and

chronic disease management and health ageing program that includes access to training modules and support.

Further information about participating in the NiPHC program is available from APNA's website at <https://www.apna.asn.au/>

### Nursing Postgraduate Scholarship

The Nursing Postgraduate Scholarship under the Mental Health Nursing, Allied Health and Psychology Scholarships Program provides up to \$30,000 for nurses working in or intending to work in the mental health sector to undertake postgraduate study. Applications for the 2022 Nursing Postgraduate Scholarships are now closed. Applications for studies commencing or continuing in 2023 will open in August 2022. Further information is available on the Australian College of Nursing's [website](#).

### Continued Professional Development (CPD) Opportunities

I am pleased to share with you some CPD opportunities. Both courses and the webinar are free of charge.

#### **Webinar on the risk of medicine side effects in older people**

A new education program funded by the Australian Government Department of Health to support staff in residential aged care facilities is being delivered by NPS MedicineWise.

As part of this program, a webinar for aged-care support staff: **Falls, confusion and other issues. Could medicines with anticholinergic effects be the cause?** was held on 22 June. See the on-demand recording [here](#).

#### **Recognising and responding to sexual violence in adults**

Monash University's Department of Forensic Medicine and the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM) have developed a three-unit course in recognising and responding to sexual violence in adults. The three units include:

- Sexual violence drivers and impacts
- Responding to adult disclosures of sexual violence
- Responding to at-risk groups

Each six-week Unit includes two one-hour Zoom workshops and four hours of online interactive learning which equates to six professional development hours.

Register [here](#) for the course, today.

### **Every Nurse's Business: Building Nursing Capacity to Care for People with Intellectual Disability and Autism**

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability has found there is a greater need for education and training for health professionals caring for people with cognitive disability, including those with intellectual disability (ID) and autism (ASD).

The Every Nurses' Business free CPD programme which aims to build RNs' capacity to provide quality care for people with ASD and/or ID in mainstream health settings. The site offers foundational, intermediate, and advanced levels of learning and opportunities to claim CPD hours throughout.

To access these CPD training modules, follow this [link](#).

### **WHO: Nursing and Midwifery Community of Practice**

The WHO Chief Nursing Office officially launched the Nursing and Midwifery Global Community of Practice on 12 May. The Community of Practice aims to connect nurses, midwives and stakeholders to support collaboration together in an inclusive environment. Take the opportunity to sign up and have access to an endless range of knowledge and experience.

Sign up at: [Global Community of Practice for Nursing and Midwifery | Global Community of Practice for Nursing and Midwifery \(nursingandmidwiferyglobal.org\)](#)

Find out more: [WHO launches new Nursing and Midwifery Community of Practice for International Nurses Day](#)

### **Videos and Media**

Professor Alison McMillan answers the [Top 3 questions on Flu vaccination & pregnancy](#)

Professor Alison McMillan talks about [International Day of the Midwife and International Nurses Day](#)

Acting CMO Dr Sonya Bennett and Professor Alison McMillan Statement: [Australian community urged to get vaccinated against influenza | Australian Government Department](#)

[of Health](#)

Professor Alison McMillan and Karen Cook talk about Menopause:

[Top 3 questions on Menopause \(part 1\)](#)

[Top 3 questions on Menopause \(part 2\)](#)

Professor Alison McMillan talks about Flu Vaccination:

Watch on Facebook [Australian Government Department of Health - Flu Vaccination | Facebook](#)

Watch on Twitter [Australian Government Department of Health - Flu Vaccination | Twitter](#)

Watch on Instagram [Australian Government Department of Health - Flu Vaccination | Instagram](#)

## Mailbox

The CNMO Newsletter is now available on the Department of Health website. If you are interested to receive your own copy [subscribe to our newsletter](#).

If you have any feedback or would like to contact the CNMO team, please email the CNMO inbox - [cnmo@health.gov.au](mailto:cnmo@health.gov.au).



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