



Evidence · Practice · Innovation · Capacity

## EPIC News

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### Queensland Health Nursing & Midwifery EPIC News Issue 2, March 2008

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## thinknursing

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#### From the Chief Nurse's desk

The Editorial column in the most recent issue of the Collegian, a publication of the Royal College of Nursing Australia (RCNA), is devoted to pre-registration nursing education and the debate that comes up from time to time about university vs hospital based education programs for RNs.

It is over 20 years since the transfer of nursing education from hospitals to the university sector, and yet we still get letters to my office and we see in the media from time to time, suggestions to return education to a hospital-based trainee-ship model. Some of the arguments appear to be related to the caring role (and the view that hospital training somehow engendered this virtue in nurses). Other views are that university educated nurses are under-prepared for their roles once they graduate and commence work in a clinical environment.

Many counter arguments are given for why nurses, like every other health professional group, need, and are entitled to be adequately prepared for a diverse, complex career as a nurse. If one looks at the rapid changes in health care over the past 10 years (the bio-technological advances, new drugs and treatments, higher acuity, shorter length of stay etc), a nurse must have a very sound educational preparation to participate effectively as a member of the health care team.

But there is clearly a problem for us in terms of the general public (and some of our colleagues) understanding what a 21<sup>st</sup> century nurse is, and what the role encompasses. Why are we still having this debate 20 years on? What is it about the public's perception of a nurse's role that has not acknowledged that changes in health care service delivery demand a competent, comprehensively educated nurse to provide high quality care within that environment? Why do we talk about nurses' "work readiness" at the completion of a three year undergraduate degree when it's in our collective power to adapt curricula to meet the requirements of the changing health care landscape?

Queensland Health is about to embark on a major reform agenda for clinical education and training of nurses and midwives in Queensland, and that work will entail an examination of the way in which we manage clinical experience and placements, our competency programs (Transition to Practice) clinical supervision and financial arrangements (see article later in this Newsletter).

I would be very interested in hearing your views about why you think we have an image problem in terms of portraying a modern day nurse (or perhaps you don't think we do have a problem). I'd also like to hear your views on what we might do to inform the public about why nursing is a great career for school leavers and others, and what it means to be a nurse working in a diverse range of settings in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Send your comments to [EPICNews Back Chat c/o chiefnurse-office@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:EPICNews Back Chat c/o chiefnurse-office@health.qld.gov.au). Your comments may be printed in a forthcoming Newsletter.

*Pauline Ross*

## Evidence Practice Innovation Capacity

### The Queensland Health, Nursing and Midwifery Research Grant Scheme

Queensland Health nurses and midwives strongly support current state government research policy and as such they are committed to valuing, undertaking and using research to improve quality patient care for all Queenslanders (*Queensland Health Research and Development Strategic Plan 2006–2010*).

One of the strategies adopted to assist Queensland Health nurses and midwives to undertake quality research and to build collaborative networks with academic institutions is the Queensland Health Nursing and Midwifery Research Grant Scheme. This scheme was established in 2004 and is open to all nurses and midwives registered in Queensland who are either employed by Queensland Health, in a facility that provides services funded by Queensland Health or are working in teams with Queensland Health nurses and midwives.

The scheme provides financial support to nurses and midwives undertaking research that is focused on patient safety and quality of care, health service improvements, interventions and innovation in clinical care and building the capacity and capability of the nursing and midwifery workforce. These competitive grants are provided annually for novice and experienced researchers. Previously successful applicants have studied topics as diverse as sedation of children in ICU, student nurse clinical education and factors affecting breastfeeding cessation. The results of these and other studies are in the process of being communicated across Queensland, Australia and the world to inform clinical practice and the development of future research.

For more information please go to <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/ocno/content/research.htm>

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### Nurse Unit Manager Project

An exciting project to review the scope, skills, responsibilities and accountabilities of the role of the Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) is being conducted as part of the recommendations from EB6. The aim of this work is to enhance job satisfaction and recruitment and retention in the role and will be reported back to the Nurses Interest Based Bargaining Implementation Group in May 2008.

So far the project has taken the form of reviewing literature available internationally, interstate and state wide in the form of position descriptions, the scope of the role, research studies and peer reviewed journal articles.



Currently consultation groups are being put together to bring together key themes, share ideas and formulate possible solutions. The groups will represent metropolitan, regional and rural interests and thus represent a cross section of the NUM population and capture the variations within the role. Format is a questionnaire limited to one page designed to focus the group and then a 2-3 hour meeting for the discussion. The groups are voluntary and NUMs passionate about these issues are urged to take part.

For further information please contact Kaye Hewson (pictured) NUM Project Officer, Office of the Chief Nursing Officer, phone: (07) 3234 1035, email: [kaye\\_hewson@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:kaye_hewson@health.qld.gov.au)

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### Extract from "Growing Nursing Opportunities in Rural & Remote Queensland"

**F**or nurses, the type of lifestyle available in a particular area is often the motivating factor for selecting a given work opportunity. Rural and remote nursing can be your portal to explore Queensland from the beautiful beaches of the Capricorn Coast to the raw beauty of outback Julia Creek.

Sandra Jarvis, Nurse Manager, Rural and Remote Nursing Relief Program, Rockhampton, organises relief staff for periods of up to three months, and says that "Excellent opportunities ... exist in the newly created pool of relief nursing positions, where nurses are afforded the security of working for Queensland Health ... staff can experience Boigu Island in the north to Mungindi in the south, out to Camooweal on the Northern Territory border. If adventure, work and travel is the aim and you are either a Registered or Enrolled nurse, the program can offer you the experience you

have dreamed of". In some areas, extra financial incentives are offered to you on top of the great lifestyles that can be enjoyed.

Nyrie Roos, Director of Nursing at Kingaroy Health Service has vacancies for nursing staff. Kingaroy Health Service offers "... lot more autonomy, wider scope of practice, ... exposure to a broader patient mix. Our midwives do over 90% of our birthing here ... they are not fighting for challenging experiences... They have a greater opportunity to develop professionally with leadership and management skills, because after hours, they are the problem-solvers for the facility". Kingaroy offers onsite nurse educators, continuing professional development, accommodation provision and the opportunity to work in various nursing specialties.

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### Best-Practice Model of Clinical Education and Training for Nurses and Midwives

**C**linical placements and access to clinical experience has been a major problem for everyone involved with nursing and midwifery education. The universities, TAFEs, and health services, have all expressed frustration with the difficulties of matching need to supply for clinical placements, and the provision of sufficient competency programs to meet the growing need for specialist nurses.

It is with pleasure that OCNO announces a partnership with PhillipsKPA, a specialist educational consortium, to develop a best practice model for clinical education and training for nurses and midwives. PhillipsKPA comes to this project with a wealth of experience across the university, TAFE and government sectors and will progress the following outcomes:

1. A clear pathway to enable students to access flexible nursing /midwifery programs from the secondary school environment or mature age entry through to post-graduate studies.
2. Innovative clinical placement opportunities that extend options outside current placement and settings.
3. A methodology for matching supply and demand for clinical experience, including options for electronic solutions.

4. An agreed model for funding clinical supervision components of enrolled, undergraduate, post-graduate specialty programs and competency based programs.

Within OCNO a small team will work with the consultants. Cheryl Burns (District Director of Nursing, The Prince Charles Hospital) will provide the leadership for the project and she will be supported by specialist nurse educator advice as required as well as administration support. The Education Standing Committee which has representation from the public, private, non-government and tertiary sectors will be a major contact point for the consultants and they will meet in early March for a workshop. The project commences in February and will be completed by October 2008.

Regular updates will be provided in subsequent Newsletters and there will be a series of consultations with all the relevant stakeholders over the coming weeks and months.

For more information contact Cheryl Burns: Cheryl\_Burns@health.qld.gov.au

## Evidence Practice Innovation Capacity

### 321 Nurses Recruited for Queensland Health

The Queensland Health Recruitment Unit was established in late 2005 to address clinical recruitment issues within Queensland Health. Throughout 2006 and 2007 the QHRU has attended diverse expos and conferences and established a definitive look for advertising to increase Queensland Health visibility in the employment market.

In 2007 we introduced international direct recruitment drives in the UK which focused on nursing candidates. Direct recruitment drives for allied health professionals have since followed.

The national and international recruitment drives conducted by Queensland Health continue to be successful in recruiting doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to positions across Queensland Health.

As of February 2008 Queensland Health had received a total of 10,737 expressions of inter-

est from health professionals based in Australia and overseas. A total of 754 health professionals are currently employed in Queensland Health as a result of recruitment initiatives and an additional 328 health professionals have been offered or have accepted employment within Queensland Health. Of this 754 currently working for Queensland Health 321 are nurses.

Queensland Health continues to attend targeted national and international specialty conferences and careers fairs and coordinates recruitment drives to address clinical vacancies in 2008 supported by online and print advertisements. Critical workforce areas such as Emergency, General Medicine, Oncology, Midwifery, Critical Care and Mental Health have been identified as targets for 2008.

For more information please go to the Work for Us website [www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus)

What's  
New!

### Office of the Chief Nursing Officer Nursing & Midwifery Forum's

· Mental Health · Nurse Unit Managers · Rural & Remote

OCNO is providing a voice for Nurses & Midwives to have your say on 3 different forums. Please see the flyer attached for more information.

[www.qhepsforum.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.qhepsforum.health.qld.gov.au)

### Extract from "Growing Nursing Opportunities in Rural & Remote Queensland"

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With the population boom in Queensland, including growth in rural and remote centres, the opportunities for nurses are many and varied. The challenge now is to find enough people to work in these locations. If you would like a bush break, please contact the following numbers for more information.

**Rural and Remote Nursing Relief Program,**  
phone: (07) 4920 6824  
**Kingaroy Health Service,**  
phone: (07) 4162 9200  
**Mt Isa Health Service District,**  
phone: (07) 4744 4444

## Introducing....

### Diana Schmalkuche, Nursing Director - Workforce & Careers

**D**iana has been a registered nurse in Queensland for 22 years. During this time she has worked across a variety of settings in metropolitan and regional Queensland in both private and public sectors.

She has specialised in mental health nursing, working in acute and community based services. She has also been a mental health nurse consultant in the general hospital setting which linked advanced nursing practice with clinical education and mentorship. Diana has also taught nursing students in both the university and vocational education sector.

Since 2005, Diana has been working in Queensland Health in workforce planning and has recently taken up the role of Nursing Director for Workforce and Careers in the Office of the Chief Nursing Officer, Queensland Health.

'I anticipate that 2008 will be a busy and rewarding year. I will be progressing a number of priorities in 2008 relating to workforce supply and retention in collaboration with the Area Nursing

Workforce Advisory Groups and other key stakeholders such as NIBBIG. These include: the full implementation of the Business Planning Framework to districts with education resources and establishment of expert BPF users in each district; the development of a statewide recruitment strategy with particular emphasis on rural and remote nursing, and; the strengthening of career pathways and skill development opportunities for all nurses in Queensland Health.



Diana Schmalkuche  
Nursing Director - Workforce & Careers

## Back Chat email: [chiefnurse-office@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:chiefnurse-office@health.qld.gov.au)

### This Issue's Topic

Does Nursing have an image problem?

Why is nursing a great career for school leavers and others?

What it means to be a nurse working in a diverse range of settings in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

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Please email your comments to [chiefnurse-office@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:chiefnurse-office@health.qld.gov.au) and it will be published in the next Queensland Health Nursing & Midwifery EPIC Newsletter.

Please state if you wish to remain anonymous.