

Nursing Review

Please give
this extra copy
to a colleague

AUSTRALIA'S INDEPENDENT VOICE OF NURSING

www.nursingreview.com.au | SEPTEMBER 2008

NEWS Doctors' assistant doubt 3

Trials of physicians' assistants in Qld and SA under cloud



RCNA Looking ahead 8

Professions celebrate launch of codes



SPECIAL FEATURE A good death 12

A UK strategy is lifting barriers to nurses caring for the dying



INFECTION CONTROL Tracking superbugs 16

The control of healthcare associated infection requires surveillance



WARTIME RESPONSE: Gold Coast nurse Andrew Cameron holds low birthweight twins at Jalalabad Hospital in eastern Afghanistan. He writes about the challenges for nursing during a conflict on page 5.

Codes herald new era of accountability

by Kent Rosenthal

The Parliament House launch in August of separate codes of ethics and professional conduct for nursing and midwifery marks a new era of accountability to consumers of healthcare.

Midwifery now has a code of ethics and code of conduct distinct to the two nursing codes, recognising midwifery as a profession in its own right and lifting both professions to a new level of professionalism that will protect patients from misconduct.

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) deputy chairperson Adjunct Associate Professor Moira Laverty said the codes would

set distinct standards with real consequences for registration, education and professional behaviour.

"A few people have asked me if they have any teeth – well they do. They are about saying to everyone in plain English that this is what you can expect from nurses and midwives in terms of how they act and behave and if that doesn't happen then they can be reassured there's a mechanism for that to be dealt with."

The codes were developed as a joint project led by the ANMC in collaboration with the Australian College of Midwives (ACM), the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) and the Royal College

Continued on page 4

A step closer to national register

The Federal Government said the launch of national codes of ethics and professional conduct for nurses and midwives is an important step towards a national nurse register.

Parliamentary health secretary Jan McLucas said the government hoped to have a national nurse register operating by the end of 2010.

"We intend to establish one registry of nurses and midwives that ensures not only that nurses can move around the country and be able to practice in each state and territory, but also that we will have therefore uniform codes of behaviour and codes of practice across the nation," she said.

Meanwhile, Queensland will introduce laws to establish a national registration scheme for all healthcare professionals before the end of this year and other states and territories would subsequently sign on to it, according to Queensland Health Minister Stephen Robertson.

The laws would help stop rogue doctors and nurses from moving from one state to another, he said. While nurses are required to register in each state they wish to work, under current "mutual recognition" guidelines, doctors registered in one state are given automatic registration in another state.

"We will never again be faced with the situation where one state fails to pass on information to another and a doctor who is not practising well or who is practising beyond his or her level of accreditation will be pulled up very, very quickly and won't be able to be employed in another jurisdiction," Robertson said.

Robertson said Queensland would introduce laws setting out uniform national standards for registering individual health professionals and improving information-sharing between professional bodies. He said national registration and accreditation will create a more streamlined system better equipped to deal with patient safety issues.

The scheme would establish the foundations for a more flexible, sustainable, mobile and responsive health workforce, he said.

Under the Australian Constitution, a state had to bring in enabling legislation to which other states could sign on because the Federal Parliament did not have the jurisdiction to do so.

"Queensland will be the host state," Robertson said.

Continued on page 4



e-chamber®

E-Chamber ensures TGA compliance & best practice

\$3.95ea

Hospital single patient use asthma spacer

FREE sample kits now available

PH. 1300 365 561

www.birdhealthcare.com



BIRDHealthcare