

## Media release

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25 September 2015

### Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia to fund a national service to support nurses and midwives with a health impairment

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) will fund a nationally consistent health support service for all registered nurses and midwives, and students enrolled in approved nursing and midwifery courses.

The national health support service will be run at arms length from the NMBA, and be designed to ensure that nurses and midwives can access support if they are impaired or at risk of impairment. In addition, the service will improve education and awareness among nurses and midwives about impairment, which will in turn reduce risk to the public.

'This is an important decision for the NMBA. We care about the wellbeing of nurses, midwives and students and we are committed to a nationally consistent and equitable service that supports them in line with the NMBA's regulatory role,' said the NMBA Chair, Dr Lynette Cusack RN.

In making its decision to fund the service, the NMBA considered an independent report informed by extensive consultation with stakeholders. The report was commissioned to:

- review the referral/notification, assessment, treatment, monitoring and rehabilitation for health practitioners with a health impairment (the management and support process), and
- the role the regulator may play in supporting national health support programs, giving consideration to the National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

The NMBA is now working with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to develop a detailed model to determine the core services and the level of funding required. More details on the open tender process to select an independent party to deliver the service will be published as decisions are made.

The cost of establishing the national service will be achieved within existing resources with no increase to registration fees. The NMBA will also continue to fund the existing Victorian Nurses and Midwives Health Program until the new service is established.

'We look forward to partnering with an independent provider who has the right expertise to provide and to deliver this important service to nurses and midwives nationally on behalf of the NMBA' said Dr Cusack.

*For more information*

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