



Midwives acknowledged on International Midwives Day

Last week, midwives across New Zealand celebrated International Midwives Day. This was a day where the work of midwives was acknowledged and recognised by your employers.

This recognition of midwives was very timely given various initiatives happening that will impact on MERAS members.

Midwifery Scope of Practice reviewed

As you will be aware, Midwifery Council has been consulting on changes to the Midwifery Scope of Practice. MERAS, along with the College of Midwives, has provided feedback on the changes.

MERAS regularly uses the scope of practice especially in relation to redeployment policies - moving midwives to wards outside of maternity or asking them to care for non-maternity patients. This was a key focus in the MERAS feedback.

Other concerns raised by members were also highlighted. The feedback MERAS provided is attached.

Health NZ Clinical Leadership model questioned

Along with other midwifery organisations, MERAS was disappointed to see the proposed Director of Nursing, Midwifery in the proposed Health NZ Clinical Leadership model. This is viewed as a backward step for midwifery and fails to recognise the separate professions of nursing and midwifery.

Both MERAS and the College of Midwives have written to the Interim CE of Health NZ, Margie Apa, to highlight our concerns about the proposed leadership structure. The letter is attached.

Workplace midwifery forums established

MERAS has established regular meetings at many DHBs with MERAS representatives, midwife managers and Directors of Midwifery to discuss local ideas for recruitment and retention of midwives, with a focus on addressing the midwifery vacancies. Actions from these meetings should be shared with staff.

Quality Leadership Programme (QLP)

The QLP has been a part of the DHB MERAS MECA since 2005, with the criteria revised in 2015.

QLP provides opportunities for midwives to be acknowledged for the contribution they make to their workplace.

All midwives should be able to meet the criteria for confident domain within two years of graduation, and most experienced midwives would meet the criteria for leadership domain.

Information about QLP applications is available on the MERAS website. If you are interested in completing a QLP application, discuss this with your midwife manager at your performance appraisal.

Advice or support to complete an application can be sought from a colleague who has QLP leadership, your local MERAS workplace rep or a QLP assessor.

MERAS will be organising some QLP zoom sessions for those who want to be QLP assessors and those doing QLP leadership applications.

Pay Equity campaign underway

Workplace reps from around the country are setting up appointments with local MPs to let them know we are expecting a process that is fair and adheres to the principles of pay equity.

What is apparent is that the Crown negotiator has been given a pot of money by Cabinet to bargain with and there is not enough in it to reflect the outcomes of the midwifery pay equity assessment process.

That's why we're asking sympathetic MPs to put pressure on their leadership to put more money into the midwives' pay equity settlement. Your reps will be calling on you to join them over the next few weeks.

We are also keeping an eye on the case the NZNO is taking to the Employment Relations Authority as MERAS also has the same backpay provision in the MoU that formed part of our last MECA settlement.

Continuing Professional Education fund

MERAS members are starting to claim for College of Midwives fees and education funding. We are aware there have been some difficulties for those paying fortnightly to have their receipts accepted by payroll.

Please contact Lisa Donkin, MERAS membership secretary, if you need advice about your NZCOM receipt at membership@nzcom.org.nz

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