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Supporting the HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Workforce

Standards Review

Australian Nursing and Midwifery

Accreditation Council

GPO Box 400

Canberra City ACT 2601

Re: Review of Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards, Consultation stage 3

Dear Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council

About the Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM)

ASHM is a not for profit, member based, peak organisation representing the HIV, viral hepatitis and sexual health workforce in Australia, New Zealand, Asia and the Pacific.

ASHM recognises the vital role that nurses play in the care and management of those at risk of and living with HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections (STIs). Our Nursing program aims to:

- Strengthen the role of nurses working in HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs
- Support nursing organisations within the sector to develop, deliver and evaluate education on blood-borne viruses and STIs
- Advocate for the role of nurses in the care and management of people with HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs
- Advocate for safe and equitable care, free of stigma and discrimination for people with HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs

Response to Consultation paper 3

ASHM welcomes the opportunity to respond to consultation paper 3. ASHM also acknowledges the responses to consultation 2 by our affiliated nursing organisation, Drug and Alcohol Nurses Australasia and the National LGBTI Health Alliance. Both organisations raised issues related to alcohol and other drugs, mental health and stigma and discrimination for people accessing healthcare which are issues integral to ASHM's values and considered critical for inclusion in the development of our educational programs.

Stigma and discrimination

People living with blood borne viruses and STIs continue to experience stigma and discrimination when accessing healthcare in Australian health settings. Stigma and discrimination are a result of individual attitudes, beliefs and behaviours about gender, sexual orientation, alcohol and other drug use, culture and behaviours, that when perpetuated by nurses and other health professionals providing care, have detrimental and devastating impacts on health and wellbeing.¹

The consideration of discourse and content related to stigma and discrimination in undergraduate nurse curriculum in the proposed Standard 3: program of study, would significantly assist future nurses to review and evaluate their own attitudes, beliefs and behaviours relevant to their nursing practice. The Department

¹ Cama, E., Brener, L., Hopwood, M., de Wit, J., Treloar, C. (2017). *Stigma indicators monitoring project final report*. Sydney, New South Wales



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of Health has committed funding to ASHM to develop a suite of resources for health care professionals to address stigmatising and discriminatory practices that are appropriate for undergraduate nurse education. Development of these resources and others supports the goal to eliminate the negative impact of stigma and discrimination on peoples health and wellbeing as outlined in the recently released National HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and Sexually Transmissible Infections strategies. Robust and rigorous evaluation of learning objectives related to stigma and discrimination would also be welcomed.

Additionally, the integration of content addressing cultural diversity and safety and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and health in to curriculums as suggested in Standard 3: Program of study are viewed positively by ASHM and are a significant step toward ensuring that undergraduate nursing students are provided with appropriate foundations of understanding of their role in the provision of safe and equitable health care to all.

Primary Health Care

ASHM is encouraged by the focus of the integration of knowledge of care across the lifespan, inclusive of PHC as suggested in Standard 3: Program of study. Expert, efficient and cost effective PHC services are essential to reduce hospitalisation rates, improve care and health outcomes for people in their communities.² Nurses work across a range of primary care settings providing unique and innovative health care services. PHC services and workforce are rapidly expanding and provide an exciting career pathway and opportunities for career progression for people entering the nursing profession. A solid foundation in PHC theory, concepts and practice at an undergraduate level, will benefit students and health outcomes of the community.

ASHM is supportive of the work undertaken by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council and appreciates the opportunity provided for consultation on the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards.

If you require additional information please do not hesitate to contact Melinda Hassall, Clinical Nurse Lead Nursing Program melinda.hassall@ashm.org.au or 0422 596 701.

Kind regards

Alexis Apostolellis
Chief Executive Officer
Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine
On behalf of the ASHM Board of Directors, Clinical Advisors and Collaborators

² Health Workforce Australia. (2014). Australia's Future Health Workforce – Nurses, Detailed report. Retrieved from: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/australias-future-health-workforce-nurses>