

Supporting nurses in primary health care



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The Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
Legislation Committee
Via: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

**Inquiry into the Australian National Preventive Health Agency (Abolition) Bill 2014:
APNA submission**

The Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA) is the national professional association supporting and representing nurses delivering front line care in general practice and other primary health care settings.

APNA makes the following comments in response to the Australian National Preventive Health Agency (Abolition) Bill 2014.

We note that the intent of the Bill is to disestablish the Australian National Preventive Health Agency (ANPHA), and that the Commonwealth Department of Health will continue to have a national leadership role on relevant preventive health issues.

It is important that in its future preventive health work, the Department focus strongly on the role of primary health care professionals, including nurses, in promoting healthy lifestyles and good nutrition, reducing tobacco use, reducing harmful drinking of alcohol, discouraging substance abuse, and reducing the incidence of obesity amongst Australians.

Nurses are a substantial, and growing, component of the primary health care workforce. They are credible sources of information for many Australians. Nurses make an increasingly important contribution to primary health care in Australia, working alongside doctors and other health professionals. Primary health care nurses, using evidence-based approaches, play a major role in improving health outcomes through their role in delivering quality immunisation services, other preventive care, chronic disease management and other curative care. They are often practical and influential drivers of improvements in primary health care systems.

A great deal of the growing burden of chronic disease needs to be dealt with at primary care level, and the primary health care workforce, including the nursing workforce, is well equipped to take an effective role in the prevention and early intervention in relation to risk factors for chronic disease.

Innovative approaches to informing, educating and supporting nurses working in general practice and primary health care, to take a more skilled and proactive role in risk factor reduction and disease prevention, will be vital to meeting national goals in this area.

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As the national association for primary health care nurses, APNA has a track record in providing this information, education and support. APNA is ready and willing to participate in and support future initiatives in this area.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to this Inquiry. We would be happy to provide any further information on request.

Yours sincerely

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