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ACN advocates for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers to access quality health

Refugees and asylum seekers often have considerable health needs arising from psychological trauma, nutritional deficiencies, poor oral health status, poorly managed chronic diseases and the physical consequences of torture or sexual abuse.

At the National Nursing Forum in Brisbane yesterday, the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) released a position statement Quality Health Care for all Refugees and Asylum Seekers. The position statement articulates ACN’s commitment to the protection of the health, welfare and dignity of refugees and asylum seekers and their children.

The Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia recognises the universal human rights of people and the moral responsibility of nurses to safeguard the inherent dignity and equal worth in everyone. Carmen Morgan, ACN President, stressed the importance of legislation, pertaining to refugees and asylum seekers, not interfering with nursing requirements under the Code.

“Governments must ensure that policies support the provision of high quality health care to all those seeking refuge in Australia. Refugees and asylum seekers are some of the most vulnerable groups. The nursing profession has a moral obligation to protect refugees’ and asylum seekers’ human rights, including their right to quality health care,” Ms Morgan stated.

Further, the environment in which refugees and asylum seekers reside should protect and preserve their physical and mental health. It is imperative that children in particular are provided with positive social and physical environments, and childhood health care and education.

ACN will continue to advocate for quality health care for all those who require it, especially the more vulnerable members of the community.

ACN’s position statement can be found at http://www.acn.edu.au/position_statements

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For interviews, or for more information, please contact Kathleen McLaughlin on Kathleen.McLaughlin@acn.edu.au.
Kathleen McLaughlin, Acting CEO of ACN

Carmen Morgan, President of ACN
Notes to the Editors:

ACN, an organisation not afraid to intelligently challenge industry issues affecting the nursing profession or Australia’s healthcare, is a well-connected and educated national body that drives change with people of influence to enhance the delivery of health services to the Australian community. ACN advances the skills and expertise of nurses to provide leadership in their contribution to the policy, practice and delivery of health care.

A membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialities, ACN’s membership includes many nurses in roles of influence, including senior nurses, organisational leaders, academics and researchers.

What is the role of the ACN to media?

- ACN provides trusted, well supported information about Australia’s health care system, the delivery of health care, nursing leadership and the nursing profession.
- ACN has a number of media-savvy spokespeople within the organisation who can comment on Australia’s health care system, the delivery of health care, nursing leadership and the nursing profession.
- ACN offers media with an alternative voice to that of an industrial relations perspective.
- ACN is in-the-know and can comment on health care matters of interest.
- ACN can respond to media requests in a timely manner and with subject/clinical expert’s available on-hand for further discussion.
- ACN regularly respond to government updates pertaining to Australia’s health care system.

What role does the ACN play?

The ACN are here to act and deliver results as agents of change. They are working towards a
brighter future through advancing nurse leadership to enhance the delivery of health care to all.

The organisation provides nurse leaders with access to relevant information, support and education will enhance Australia’s reputation on the world stage.

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