AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF NURSING APPLAUDS PUBLICATION OF ATLAS OF HEALTH CARE VARIATION AND SAYS NURSES ARE READY TO LEAD THE CHANGE

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) applauds the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care for its release of the Australian Atlas of Health Care Variation.

The atlas paints a picture of significant differences in health care across the country and lays the foundation that will lead to a more detailed exploration of the underlying clinical, social and health workforce issues.

A particular focus of the atlas is the marked variation in health care across urban, rural, regional and remote areas of Australia.

“In order to address some of the possible causes for these variations, opportunities exist here to extend the scope of practice of nurses, including fully utilizing the role of nurse practitioners in leading change,” said Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward, CEO of ACN.

As an initiative, this atlas provides a visual indicator not only of what may be deficient in current approaches to health care delivery but also what the Australian health care system could achieve in the future.

“Nurses are the largest health professional workforce in Australia as well as a significant contributor to communities, optimal patient outcomes and experiences. In time as the atlas expands its scope, nursing sensitive indicators could be incorporated so the full potential of the nursing profession can be realised which, in turn, will have positive benefits for communities throughout Australia,” said Ms Ward.

Greater recognition that geographical variation is influenced by the social determinants of health and the individual person’s ability to be involved in shared decision-making regarding their care will also be key factors in finding solutions. Larger investments in nurses’ delivery of health education, health literacy and health promotion will help to empower individuals where appropriate to be full partners in their own healthcare.

A seemingly unwarranted geographic variation in health care delivery may be linked to a mal-distribution of clinicians. The atlas is portraying that the current Australian health workforce strategies are not necessarily reflecting population health needs.
Developing responsive, long-term synergistic approaches to the full health workforce whether nurses, allied health professionals or medical practitioners, will help to address the variation. This work should be carried out at the national level, with critical input from local and state authorities, as well as clinicians, consumers and leading professional organisations such as ACN.

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For interviews, or for more information, please contact Wendy Hooke on Wendy.Hooke@acn.edu.au or 0448 004 039.

Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward, CEO 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.

Social media channels:
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/acnursing
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