

**COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY NURSING AUSTRALASIA LTD.  
NSW BRANCH**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**28 September 2007**

**The College of Emergency Nursing Australasia Ltd. (CENA) is the peak national nursing specialty organisation representing emergency nurses.**

The NSW Branch of the College of Emergency Nursing Australasia Ltd. responded to media reports surrounding issues relating to a woman who miscarried in the waiting room toilets of the Emergency Department of Royal North Shore Hospital, Sydney.

The state government announced an inquiry into the treatment of “patients presenting with miscarriages or threatened miscarriages” in the public health system yesterday.

NSW President and National Director Toni McCallum Pardey said: “The fact is there are insufficient resources in Emergency Departments throughout NSW. Emergency Departments lack adequate levels of human, educational, technological, facility and ancillary resources. There is insufficient funding for nursing staff levels to meet the needs of emergency patients.”

Nurses, in particular Triage Nurses, who are the front-line in emergency departments, are exposed on a daily basis to abuse from exasperated and irate patients, their family members or friends, whose expectations for prompt, quality care are unable to be met, Ms McCallum Pardey said.

“The recognition that resources are grossly overstretched is not new, nursing and medical staff having been highlighting their concerns for many years” Ms McCallum Pardey said.

“Emergency Nurses have worked hard to improve services they provide to patients in an effort to streamline treatment and decrease waiting times. The Scope of Practice for emergency nurses has extended significantly in recent years.

Yet by extending the Scope of Practice, compounded by ever increasing demand for service, the problem of unreasonably heavy workloads for emergency nurses has worsened.”

“International evidence clearly demonstrates that an inadequate number of university educated registered nurses is associated with significantly higher risks of adverse outcomes for patients, including death,”<sup>1,2</sup> Ms McCallum Pardey said.

“There is no Emergency Nursing workforce tool used in NSW to establish appropriate nursing staff numbers. Nurses are forced to work with inadequate staffing levels in an attempt to meet the needs of patients.

In response to media reports that the inquiry will be conducted, CENAs position is clear: any review of patient care must include an appropriately qualified nurse,” Ms McCallum Pardey said.

**References**

1 Needleman, J., et al. *Nurse staffing levels and the quality of care in hospitals*, *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2002, 346:22, pp.1715-1722.

2 Cho, S., et al. *The effect of nurse staffing on adverse events, morbidity, mortality, and medical costs*, *Nursing Research*, 2003, 52:2, pp. 71-79.

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