



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Nurses rally support around ratios and Medicare

Members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) are speaking with the local community about their campaign for improved nurse-to-patient ratios and the need to save Medicare.

The members, from NSWNMA Bankstown Hospital Branch, have been calling on the NSW government to extend nurse-to-patient ratios into more public health facilities and specialty units, particularly emergency departments, intensive care units and community health.

Currently, only selected wards in metropolitan hospitals have ratios of one nurse to four patients in place. International research indicates that increasing the amount of nursing care leads to better health outcomes for patients.

The passing of June 30 spelt another year without improved nurses-to-patient ratios, prompting nurses to call on the government to take their campaign seriously.

Karen Fernance, secretary of Bankstown Hospital Branch of the NSWNMA, said local nurses and midwives were committed to safe patient care and a well resourced public health system.

"It's important the Bankstown community is aware of what their local nurses and midwives are up against when trying to deliver safe patient care," Mrs Fernance said.

"Our branch members are rightly concerned about recent health funding cuts in the federal and state budgets and what that means for the likelihood of ratios being mandated across all public health facilities in NSW.

"The branch also has fears about the impact of a co-payment being introduced for Medicare – if successful, what's to stop that co-payment increasing or forcing people to turn up to our already stretched emergency departments, in a hope of avoiding that fee?"

"We will continue campaigning around these issues and ensure that the community is well informed."

The NSWNMA members will also hand out information about their *Ratios: put patient safety first* campaign and seek support from community members, by encouraging them to visit www.backyournurses.org or via social media at www.facebook.com/safepatientcare

NB: Bankstown Hospital Branch members will have a quick photo opportunity outside the hospital's emergency department entrance at 1.00pm TOMORROW, Thursday 3 July.

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