



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Urgent need for ratios and action on violence

The shocking impacts of violence and aggression toward frontline nurses and midwives dominated discussion at the 74th Annual Conference of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) in Sydney.

Desperate for support, more than 400 nursing and midwifery delegates rose from their seats inside the International Convention Centre to show NSW Health Minister, Brad Hazzard, the widespread need for improvement across the state.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, said the current systems and violence prevention policies were clearly inadequate in addressing the growing prevalence of the issue.

"It's devastating to know almost every nurse and midwife attending conference has been on the receiving end of violence or aggression in their workplace at some point during their career," said Mr Holmes.

"This is a systemic issue and it's having a profound impact on the health sector. A sector which is already under enormous pressure from population growth, increased presentations, increased acuity and massive understaffing issues.

"Public, private, aged care, mental health and community health workers are all being impacted - of all qualifications and levels of experience. This cannot continue. The Minister must prioritise addressing this issue.

"We represent the largest part of the health workforce. Nurses and midwives should be able to feel safe in their workplace."

NSWNMA Assistant General Secretary, Judith Kiejda, said the campaign for nurse-to-patient ratios to be introduced, shift by shift, across all hospitals had unanimous support from delegates to continue.

"This is a fight to improve patient safety and ensure our nurses and midwives don't continue to be worked into the ground. They are working understaffed and under supported and it's not good enough," Ms Kiejda said.

"We will not let this go and we will not shut up about it. We need nurse-to-patient ratios in NSW because we know ratios save lives – the evidence is in. We also know mandated ratios would result in better patient outcomes and the economic benefits are a no brainer.

"Victoria and Queensland are enjoying the benefits ratios bring to their public health systems – we want patients in NSW to benefit too. The sooner this government wakes up to this fact, the better."

International guest speaker, Tracy Zambory, President of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses encouraged conference delegates to keep up the fight and to continue supporting each other.

"We can use our voices to demand better and drive change for all. Rather than remaining on perpetual defence, we need to be bold. There is unfinished business, we need to all come together. We need to all stand and practise solidarity as a whole," said Ms Zambory.



NSWNMA delegates committed to continue robust campaigns for nurse-to-patient ratios throughout the entire health system and aged care sector to improve staffing and skills mix.

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