



**THE ROLE OF THE REGISTERED NURSE
IN MENTAL HEALTH**

**SUBMISSION TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH'S
ADVISORY GROUP ON THE CLINICAL WORKFORCE
TO SUPPORT REGISTERED NURSES**

This submission is made by Platform Charitable Trust on behalf of member organisations that employ mental health nurses in the non government sector.

Background

We have read and endorse the report prepared by Dr Frances Hughes and the response by the College of Mental Health Nurses to the Ministry of Health's advisory group on the clinical workforce to support Registered Nurses.

Individual staff members, who are members of the College of Mental Health Nurses, have endorsed the statements made by the College particularly in regard to the role difference of Registered Nurses between mental health and other health settings.

The following comments, whilst by one particular agency, have been endorsed by other NGO service providers.

There are many non government organisations currently employing mental health nurses. This can be a challenging position that often requires advanced advocacy skills within a myriad of complex relationships, including working with other providers of health services. In addition there are particular challenges in providing a service that takes account of the people's lived experience of mental illness, both in terms of maximizing choice and exercising control. Increasingly Intentional Peer Workers are part of the staff team.

There are also differences in the multi disciplinary team's (MDT) decision making, between traditional hospital based services and those of community organisations. Within the DHB setting multi professional teams encompass a wide selection of health professionals regulated by the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act whose support staff rarely contributes to decision making. Within non government organisations, support staff and registered nurses are seen as equal partners along with the person who is using the service. This raises a number of issues in relation to the role and accountability of the Registered Nurse and specifically in the delegation of nursing activities.

We welcome the opportunity to provide further information to the advisory group and as we believe it is important to raise the profile of Registered Nurses working within the NGO sector. They have a complex role particularly in relation to delegation and supervision of nursing activity to support staff, people who use the service and their whanau. This was outlined in the publication "Health Practitioners Competency and Assurance Act and the Disability and Mental Health and Addictions NGO Sector (November 2005)."