

Media release

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Whānau Āwhina Plunket and Family Planning New Zealand call on Immigration Minister to reconsider fast-tracked residence pathway

Whānau Āwhina Plunket and Family Planning New Zealand are disappointed that overseas nurses have been left of the fast-tracked ‘straight to residence’ pathway.

They have joined the New Zealand Nurses Organisation in calling for Immigration Minister Kris Faafoi to reconsider the decision to leave them off the new ‘green list’ announced yesterday.

The new list aims to make it easier for employers to hire highly skilled migrants in hard-to-fill jobs. It allows overseas doctors, scientists and engineers to apply for residence from September – but does not include registered nurses.

They are instead on the ‘work to residence pathway’, which allows occupations listed to apply for residence but only after being in New Zealand for two years first.

Whānau Āwhina Plunket Chief Executive Amanda Malu says the decision to omit nurses and from the fast-tracked list was in stark contrast to the spirit of today’s International Nurses’ Day celebration.

“It’s ironic that the Government has ignored this year’s theme “Invest in nursing and respect rights to secure global health” in securing the future of nursing in Aotearoa, in the midst of a global health crisis,” Ms Malu says.

“We have 28 nursing vacancies in the Auckland region, including 16 full-time positions in central Auckland and 12 in Counties Manukau.

“We need all the help we can get to fill vacancies in the sector and putting nurses in the ‘straight to residence’ pathway will remove barriers.”

Family Planning New Zealand Chief Executive Jackie Edmond says the nursing shortage will continue to affect the entire health care system if it remains unaddressed.

“I cannot see the sense in neglecting to include nurses from the fast-tracked pathway when as a country, we are crying out for health professionals,” Ms Edmond says.

“This decision is short-sighted and sends a clear message that our Government doesn’t appreciate the importance of our nursing workforce.”

Nursing staffing issues have increased with the borders closed during the pandemic, cutting off the flow of overseas workers, Ms Malu adds.

“The Government should be removing any and every barrier to recruiting nurses and midwives. Including nurses on the fast-tracked list would be a sensible first step, as the shortage in this profession affects everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand.”



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