

From: Melanie [melanie_suares@optusnet.com.au]
Sent: Thursday, 27 December 2001 9:51 PM
To: Adjudication@accc.gov.au
Subject: the new proposal of the Health Purchasing of Victoria
Dear ACCC,



Re: the new proposal from the Health Purchasing of Victoria regarding the tendering out of services provided by nursing agencies.

I am currently a Registered Nurse, who works for a Nursing agency in Victoria. I have been nursing for the last 12 years of my career, in that time I have gone back to study many times, and am a specialist nurse in Critical care areas, midwifery and oncology. I have worked in management positions and also at the ward level. I feel I have a moderate view of this dilemma. Cost is an issue for everyone however I do not believe that price fixing and tendering is the answer.

I am appalled to think that there has been a submission to even have this tendering happen. There is no other profession that would allow for this to even try to occur. It is ludicrous to set how much a professional is ever allowed to make, setting a ceiling rate smacks of not only anti-competitiveness, but is also exclusionary. If this is allowed to occur, what will happen to all the other services in hospitals that have been staffed by casual/agency staff. Will this same process occur to locum doctors that work in busy emergency departments, who don't have their own staff to staff the area, or pharmacists, physiotherapists, dentists. I hope not. I believe should this proposal be allowed to go through the exodus of nursing staff and the shortage of nurses will be even greater, it will sent shock waves of massive discontent, like no industrial action can. This is because nurses, particularly nurses with critical care qualifications such as myself have much better offers overseas, or will choose to stay at home and raise families (as a lot of agency nurses are mothers and fathers and choose working through agencies because of the better rates the hospital provide and the flexibility of the work). The drain of senior or even not so senior staff will be horrendous.

Allowing for interim authorisation, will be have a great negative impact on the health care system, this proposal is not going to solve the bed deficiency problem, neither will it solve a balance of figures problem in the both the long term and short term, because nurses simply will not be attracted to the hospital system and the hospitals will have to spend even more money attempting to attract nurses from overseas and educating student nurses who they are finding less and less of. Agency nurses are important to a smooth running hospital, they will not come if this proposal is put through, and the whole submission will fall through, because the main crux of the matter is that what is needed is beds to remain open and safe and appropriate care to be given to patients, this will not happen if the submission is put through because inappropriate staff will be pressured to things that are inappropriate.

Agency nurses such as myself are highly qualified with many years of experience should not be excluded in such a manner and in closing I hope that this submission is quashed and interim authorisation is never allowed.

Yours sincerely,

Melanie Suares.

2/01/02