



PRESS RELEASE

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Informed Consent

The College of Nurses Aotearoa welcomes the findings of the Health & Disability Commissioner investigation into informed consent practices at Health NZ Waitemata.

Informed consent is a key right under the Health and Disability Sector Code of Consumers rights – which was developed as a direct response to major concerns about practice in women’s health and gynaecology services at National Women’s Hospital. It is almost 30 years since the Code was released and made into law in Aotearoa.

Informed consent applies to all patients – irrespective of where the services are being provided, whether the patient is paying for the service or whether the services are being provided at a teaching hospital or facility. The rights of the patient to be informed about what treatment is being proposed and knowledge of who the team caring for them is and their role, especially in teaching, is protected. The need for health practitioners to learn is acknowledged, however patient rights must take precedence.

The College of Nurses considers that there is a responsibility for nurses to act and to advocate for patients to uphold their rights – especially for patients and whanau who are vulnerable, such as the women who were the patients in this investigation. It is not ok for nurses or other health professionals to stand by and fail to challenge colleagues who may not be considering people’s rights as patients.

We applaud the brave actions of the registered nurse who raised concerns within the team and initially with the District Health Board, before escalating these further to the Health and Disability Commissioner.

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