

# The Big Reveal: Career Pathways in Primary Health Care Nursing

Andrea Ryan, Nurse Leader, Career Development, Primary Health Care & Kathryn Scott, Organisational Career Development Consultant

## INTRODUCTION

'Better, Sooner, More Convenient' (2007) makes a strong primary health care (PHC) system central to improving the health of all New Zealanders & reducing health inequalities between different groups.

Nurses are a key workforce delivering primary health care, however an ageing workforce & expanding scopes of practice in PHC nursing present challenges:

- unlikely to be sufficient nurses to replace natural attrition
- diversity of PHC nurse roles creates a 'blurring' & a barrier to choosing primary health care as a career pathway.

## AIM

To support the recruitment and retention of PHC nurses by developing a careers information resource to raise the profile of nursing roles within PHC.

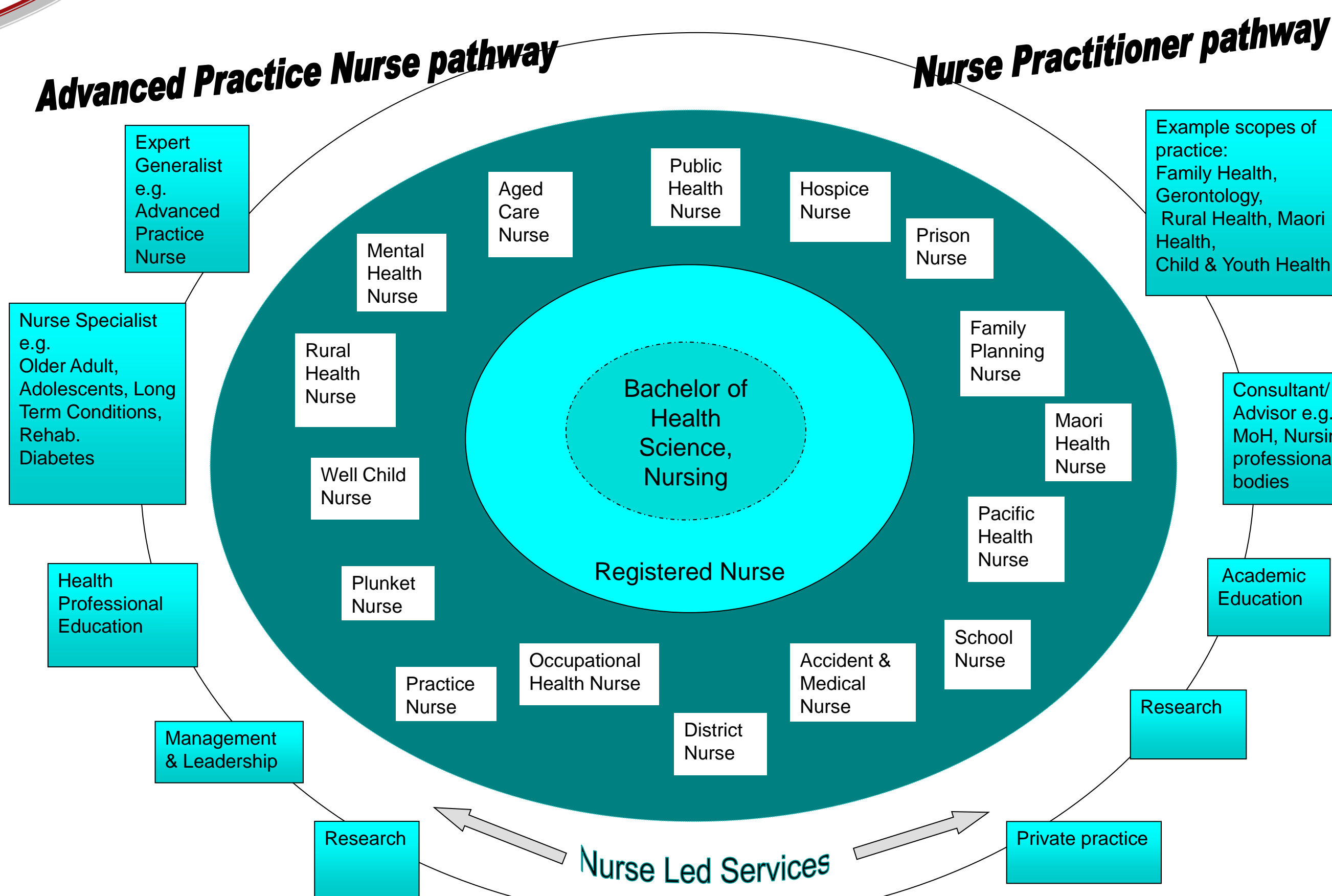
- Target groups:
- 3rd year undergraduate nursing students
  - newly registered PHC nurses
  - experienced PHC nurses.

## APPROACH

- development of diagram and card sort
- documentation rather than creation of new pathways
- consultation/collaboration with PHC nurses/nurse leaders
- alignment with Future Workforce NZ (2007) circular career framework
- integration with Waitemata DHB career pathway framework
- based on Workforce Survey 2001 which identified 13 PHC nurse roles.

## Nursing in Primary Health Care

The circle below shows example roles and pathways in Primary Health Care Nursing.



## Nurse Practitioner

A NP is a registered nurse who has a specific scope of practice e.g. family health. They require masters level education and can prescribe medicines. They work in partnership with doctors in community clinics, hospitals, peoples' homes. They are approved by the Nursing Council as a Nurse Practitioner (Nursing Council of New Zealand 2001).

## Practice Nurse

A registered nurse based in a GP practice. Role includes: triaging, running speciality clinics e.g. diabetes, asthma, other long term conditions, recalls for check ups, immunisations; health promotion & education & disease prevention; wound care, cervical screening care. In large practices or rural practices also seeing A & E type patients.

Examples of cards in card sort resource



## FUTURE PLANS

- ongoing use in career development of PHC nurses
- formal evaluation of contribution to raising profile of PHC nurse roles
- a basis for development of Knowledge and Skills Framework in PHC.

## FEEDBACK

- diagram rated 'extremely' or 'very' useful when exploring career possibilities
- "increased my knowledge of nursing roles in PHC"
- "created new ideas around possible opportunities open to me in my career"
- "didn't realise there were so many roles in PHC".
- "diagram is visually attractive"

## FINDINGS and RESULTS

- diagram developed, supported by card sort resource
- 16 PHC nurse roles identified in WDHB
- user groups: undergraduates & experienced PHC nurses
- used 1:1, in small groups & in presentations
- stimulates active discussion and questions
- a discussion tool rather than self-directed
- simple, cost effective, transportable resources.

## References

- Career Framework for the Health Workforce in New Zealand (2007).  
 Department of Health (2004). The NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (NHS KSF) and the Development Review Process  
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## Acknowledgements

Waitemata District Primary Health Care Nursing Advisory Group  
 Primary Health Care Nursing Development Team, WDHB.

