# A Practice Development Response to the COVID 19 Pandemic: A Lived Experience

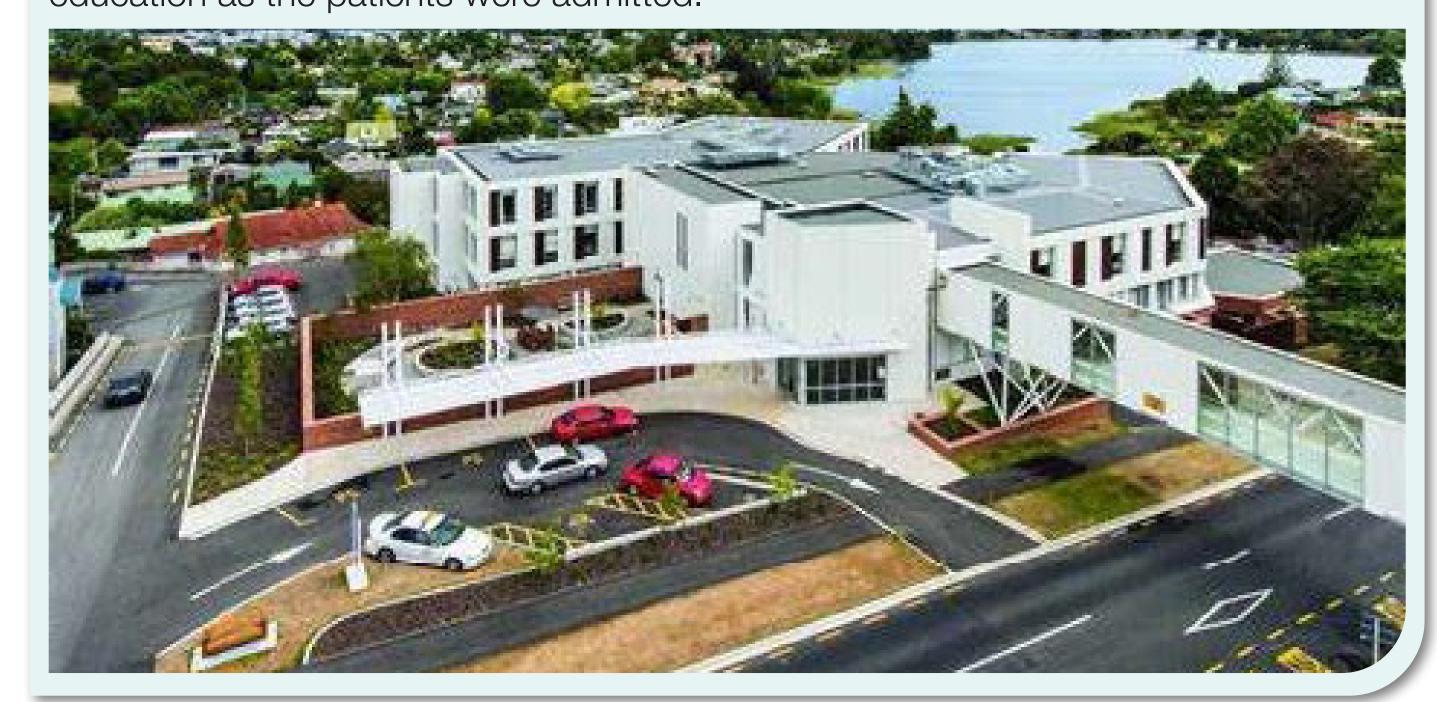
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# Nursing students

An important aspect of practice development during the first covid outbreak was ensuring students at the end of their degree finished their practice hours. We recognised the need for new nurses into the workforce and any delay in student placements would cause a workforce deficit. I worked collaboratively with our tertiary stakeholder (WINTEC) and our clinical practice areas to ensure the third-year students completed their placements in time to sit their state exam in July and become qualified nurses. WINTEC was the only tertiary centre in New Zealand that achieved all their qualifying students sit state in July and join theworkforce.

# Practice development

Part of the DHB COVID response plan initially was to change the rehabilitation service in to a non-covid medical service. My role was to upskill the staff in this area to become more confident to care for acutely unwell medical patients. I collaborated with the educator from the medical area and the management team to determine what knowledge and skills my staff would need. This included advanced medicine certification training, critical thinking workshops and scenario based education focusing on the unwell patient. I also supported the staff with real time clinical education as the patients were admitted.



### Community based assessment centres (CBAC)

Waikato District Health Board's initial pandemic response in March 2020 involved establishing a number of CBAC's. These were staffed by nurses and health care assistants who were redeployed from their usual roles. Jewel's initial involvement was to assist in setting up and leading a rural CBAC site. The CBAC's provided an opportunity for staff that wouldn't usually get to work together to collaborate and learn from each other. The rural CBAC I worked was staffed by a mixture of acute, district and public health nurses. During our 10 weeks onsite we were able to work effectively to improve our 'patients' quality of care through collaboration and creating a culture of continuous quality improvement.



## Managed isolation facilities (MIQ)

In late-2020 Waikato District Health Board (WDHB) established three managed isolation facilities (MIQ). These were developed in three existing hotels in Hamilton city, New Zealand. Once again, these were staffed by nurses and health care assistants who were redeployed from their usual roles. Jewel's role in the MIQ's involved assisting the WDHB Integrated Operations Centre pandemic response team with staffing



and rostering. Jewel supported the Professional Development Unit nursing staff as they volunteered to help fill the MIQ rosters. A large number of the nurse educator workforce offered to participate in the MIQ rosters and once again these facilities provided an opportunity for staff that wouldn't usually get to work together to collaborate and learn from each other.



# Background

Waikato District Health Board's reaction to the COVID 19 global pandemic in New Zealand (NZ) required a rapid response from the Professional Development Unit to this unprecedented situation. Nurse Educators are a diverse, flexible workforce whose work roles changed dramatically in response to the pandemic. During this time the final semester nursing students had just entered clinical practice and were withdrawn during NZ's country-wide Lockdown in April 2020. The impact of this on the students ability to sit their final state exam, negativity affecting the nursing workforce pipeline, was a major concern. This talk will focus on the lived experience from the perspective of two members of the Professional Development Unit (PDU), who each played a very different role in the response.

### Approach

Working in collaboration with our colleagues from other services, departments and tertiary providers required a rapid response to the evolving situation. To ensure the 'business as usual' was able to continue required a strategic perspective to be undertaken. Professional Development Unit staff were viewed as an adaptable workforce able to be redeployed at short notice to support the new ways of working in a rapidly developing, unknown nursing environment. For example Community Based Assessment Centres (CBAC) and Managed Isolation Facilities (MIF). During this time the need for education was substantial and continual development of staff was required.

## Take home message

- Nurse Educators are a diverse, flexible workforce whose work roles changed dramatically in response to the global pandemic.
- Nurses' ability to be adaptable, responsive and innovative was invaluable to their own practice development and those around them.

