



17 June 2011

Dr Jeremy McAnulty  
Chair  
Communicable Diseases Network Australia  
GPO Box 9848  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Dr McAnulty

[Consultation on draft CDNA Guidelines for Health Care Workers with Blood Borne Viruses](#)

Thank you for your invitation to the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) to participate in the consultation process for the draft *Australian National Guidelines for the Management of Health Care Workers known to be infected with Blood Borne Viruses*, developed by Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA).

As the largest professional and industrial organisation in Australia, the ANF has, on behalf of our over 200,000 members: nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing, a genuine interest in all aspects relating to health care workers exposure to, and subsequent contracting of, blood borne viruses. Our members provide clinical care in a wide range of settings where there is potential for contact with infective organisms, across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations in both the public and private health and aged care sectors.

The ANF had input into the previous revision process of the CDNA's 2005 *Guidelines for Managing Blood-Borne Virus Infection in Health Care Workers*, undertaken during 2009. We are pleased to note that many of the comments we submitted at that time were obviously accepted, and have been retained in the latest draft version now circulated to stakeholders.

The ANF considers that the draft document provides clear guidance for health care workers who are infected with blood borne viruses and for employers of these workers. From a professional and industrial perspective the ANF absolutely agrees with the sentiments expressed in the statement under "Guiding principles" within the Executive Summary:

*While the protection of the public's health is paramount, employers of HCWs should also consider, and comply with, relevant anti-discrimination, privacy, industrial relations and equal employment opportunity legislation.*

Nurse and midwives, as regulated health professionals, are duty bound to protect the public. Concomitantly, in the performance of their roles, and especially where those roles have exposed them to contracting blood borne viruses, they must be able to expect full support from their employers (in all aspects of employment opportunities and in financing of treatment regimes).

The revised guidelines are comprehensive and are supported by the ANF. In lending this support the ANF suggests that it be stated in the guidelines that health care workers are involved in the development of local level policies pertaining to the management of infected workers. For example, Recommendation 13 would be strengthened by adding that as well as being "informed of relevant policies" health care workers should also be "consulted in the development of such policies".

The ANF looks forward to learning the outcomes of the consultation and being able to assist in disseminating information to our members on the release of the finalised guidelines document.

Should you require any additional information or wish to discuss this matter further please contact Elizabeth Foley, Federal Professional Officer, on (03) 9602 8500 or [elizabethf@anf.org.au](mailto:elizabethf@anf.org.au).

Yours sincerely,



Lee Thomas  
Federal Secretary

The industrial and professional organisation for nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing in Australia

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