

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for the Coordination of Health and Human Services – COVID-19

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



Tuesday, 2 June, 2020

SUPPORTING OUR BRAVE NURSES AND MIDWIVES IN HOSPITALS

The Victorian Government is backing nurses and midwives with improved ratios that will see an extra 500 employed in Victorian hospitals and deliver better care to Victorians.

Legislation will be introduced today to enshrine further improvements to nurse and midwife to patient ratios ensuring nurses and midwives can devote more time to each patient – delivering better, safer care.

Amendments to the *Safe Patient Care (Nurse to Patient and Midwife to Patient Ratios) Act* complete what was started last year when the Government legislated improvements to add an extra 600 nurses and midwives.

The legislation ensures the number of nurses and midwives across all clinical settings will be rounded up, instead of down – removing a loophole that meant staff were often carrying a workload up to 50 per cent higher than the ratio.

The latest amendments mean more nurses and midwives in medical and surgical wards, birthing suites, postnatal wards, special care nurseries, geriatric evaluation management wards, larger EDs with short stay observation areas. Staffing will also be improved in residential aged care and rehabilitation wards.

Smaller regional hospitals will also get additional After Hours Coordinators where specified, acknowledging the increasing complexity of coordinating mixed services in these hospitals.

The Victorian Government is investing more than \$64 million over five years to support these changes. This is in addition to the Labor Government's \$50 million Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Development Fund.

The Government is also introducing amendments to the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, which will protect the qualifications of our growing number of Maternal and Child Health nurses.

Marking International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife and 200 years since the birth of Florence Nightingale, Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today also announced the commissioning of a mural thanking our nurses and midwives for their care and dedication - and for going above and beyond during the coronavirus pandemic.

Several prominent health sites are being considered for the location of the artwork, including the Parkville precinct which is home to The Royal Melbourne Hospital and the Royal Women's Hospital. The artist will be selected following a targeted expression of interest process in collaboration with Creative Victoria.

The Victorian Government has also allocated \$100,000 towards an exhibition to honour nursing and the key events which have shaped the profession over the last century.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"Our nurses and midwives are heroes and now more than ever we thank them for the work they do every day caring for all Victorians."

"Nurses and midwives are there for us when we need them the most – that's why we're there for them. These changes will help them devote more time to each patient and deliver high quality care in a safer environment."

"We promised we would deliver 1,100 new nurses and we're doing just that. These changes will mean an extra 500 new nurses and midwives caring for patients in our public hospitals."

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