

**Warning**

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(McLintock, A. H.,  
2009k)

**MEDICAL SERVICES**

1901

**NURSING****The Development of Nursing**

The early New Zealand hospitals had no provision for skilled nursing, the only attention received by patients being that of untrained male attendants or uneducated and untrained women. The advances in surgery in the eighties, and the development of the Nightingale tradition suggested the need for more skilled nursing and pointed the way. A system of probationer nurses who were young women with a better education and a sense of vocation was instituted at the Wellington and Auckland Hospitals in 1884, but at first no attempt was made to give any formal teaching. Organised teaching for probationer nurses was first introduced at the Wellington Hospital by Dr Truby King in 1888 during the short time he was medical superintendent, and the hospital issued a Nursing Certificate after a four months' course. The recruitment of educated probationers, and the provision of organised training, soon spread to other hospitals.

In the late nineties Mrs Grace Neill, who had been trained at Charing Cross Hospital, was appointed an Assistant Inspector of Hospitals, and after a few years she realised the need for introducing and maintaining a definite standard in the training of nurses. As the result of her representations, the Nurses Registration Act 1901 was passed, and provided for a course of three years' training and a State examination followed by registration. This was a revolutionary achievement, and thereby a firm foundation was laid on which to build the future high reputation that came to be enjoyed by New Zealand nurses. In 1904 the Midwives Act was passed and provided for the registration of midwives. This Act also gave authority for the establishment of one or more State maternity hospitals for the training of midwives, and under this provision the St. Helens Hospitals were set up.

In 1925 the Nurses and Midwives Board was formed. Its function is to determine courses of training for nurses and midwives and maternity nurses, to approve hospitals where training is undertaken, to hold examinations, and to receive applications for registration. The Board also has disciplinary powers.

At the present time 41 hospitals are approved as schools for the education of general and maternity nurses, three (St. Helens Hospitals) for midwives, two for male nurses, 10 for psychiatric nurses, three for psychopaedic nurses, and 11 for nursing aids. In 1964 there were 5,927 student nurses in training, of whom 252 were Maoris, and 10,218 qualified nurses on the practising register.

**Post-graduate School for Nurses**

Post-graduate nursing courses commenced in 1928 in Wellington where the New Zealand Post-graduate School for Nurses is still operated by the Department of Health in cooperation with the Victoria University and Teachers' Training College. In 1965 four courses are offered: Administration and Teaching for Schools of Nursing; Administration and Teaching for Public Health Nursing; Administration of Hospital Nursing Service; and Principles and Practice of Health Education.

In recent years a number of nurses from overseas have attended the course under the Colombo Plan or with WHO Fellowships. In 1965 a total of 55 nurses, 13 of them from overseas, completed the course. The post-graduate school also holds introductory courses for ward sisters and public health nurses, and refresher courses for all categories of staff.

## District Nursing

The pioneer of district nursing in New Zealand was Nurse Maude, of Christchurch, who organised a district nursing service in that locality in the early years of the century. The Department first began to employ district nurses for work among the Maoris in 1910. At first their work was mainly bedside care, but an early recognition of the need for health education among the Maori people brought about a generalised public health nursing service which has extended throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Hospital boards also employ large numbers of district nurses, their main function being bedside care in the home to relieve pressure on hospital beds by keeping patients out of hospital, and permitting earlier discharge.

## Male Nurses

Two of the larger hospital boards provide three-year courses for the training of male nurses. The armed forces also provide courses for male nurses needed in military, naval, and air-force hospitals. In 1964 there were 253 names on the Male Nurses Register.

Last updated 22-Apr-09

Next Part: [OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY](#)

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How to cite this page: 'NURSING', from An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, edited by A. H. McLintock, originally published in 1966.

Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand

URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/1966/medical-services/page-8> (accessed 27 Mar 2017)