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Sue Wood  
Director of Nursing

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ELEPHANT



## Executive Champions for ABC Smoking Cessation at Palmerston North Hospital

### Director of Nursing: Sue Wood

#### What does it mean to be a champion?

As an ex smoker I can appreciate and identify with the difficulties of quitting. As nurses we have a unique opportunity to help our patients and their families with their smoking habits.

#### Sue's Story:

I used to be a smoker and worked in a coronary care unit. I used to educate patients and their families about the dangers of smoking all the while being a smoker myself and it made me feel very uncomfortable. After I decided to quit it took me 18 months of attempts until I was finally successful. I'd be smokefree for awhile then go out for dinner with friends, have a cigarette and then I'd hate myself in the morning. So I can appreciate and identify with the difficulties of quitting and the habits that need to be thought about. But as a champion I am pleased to be able to say "never give up trying to quit".

Nurses have the unique opportunity to help people with their smoking habits as they are with their patients and their families 24/7. As nurses we have an ethical responsibility to support our patients and help them to avoid suffering unnecessary withdrawal symptoms. Nurses have been given the power to act by gaining the authority to provide NRT to patients who are smokers.

I feel that there is more we can do to help the people in our hospital. The impact on visitors in our hospital who are smokers but cannot smoke while they are in hospital grounds can be quite huge. When loved ones are in hospital this is a time when stress levels can be at their highest and visiting family members struggle with withdrawal symptoms. In the future hopefully nurses will be able to help support these people as well with the help of NRT.