



“The greatest threat to global health is the workforce shortage” - The International Council of Nurses demands action on investment in nursing, protection and safety of nurses

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) today launched its International Nurses Day (IND) toolkit, *Nurses: A Voice to Lead – Invest in nursing and respect rights to secure global health* to help nurses, other healthcare providers, governments and international organisations turn global strategy into meaningful local action and improved clinical practice on the ground.

ICN President Dr Pamela Cipriano said:

“Nurses have given their all in the fight against COVID-19, Ebola, in disaster areas and in war zones. Yet, they continue to face under-staffing, lack of protection, heavy workloads, and low wages. It is time now to take real action to address workplace safety, protect nurses and safeguard their physical and mental health.

‘Women form 70% of the global health workforce, but only 25% of leadership roles. They bear the burden of lower-paid, undervalued jobs and unpaid care and domestic work. We can help to empower women and promote gender equality by investing in nursing.

‘Recent reports have shown that investment in nursing is needed now if we are to meet the healthcare challenges of the future. We can no longer continue to undervalue and underinvest in nursing. Now is the time for action.

‘We have the recommendations from WHO, which have been agreed by the Member States. We know what to do. We need to move on from the talk and see action to support our nurses – and that is exactly what ICN’s IND toolkit provides.’”

ICN Chief Executive Officer, Howard Catton said:

“The value of nurses has never been clearer not only to our healthcare systems but also our global peace and security. Nor could it be any clearer that not enough is being done to protect nurses and other health workers, tragically underscored by the more than 180,000 health worker deaths due to COVID-19. We should not shy away from calling out that this is a question of policy and politics because the policies to rectify this lamentable situation do exist but they are not being implemented.

‘The scale of the world-wide nursing shortage is one of the greatest threats to health globally, but governments are not giving it the attention it deserves. Access to healthcare is central to safe, secure, economically successful and equitable societies, but it cannot be achieved unless there are enough nurses to provide the care needed.

‘Governments should be urgently prioritising investment in nursing and the health workforce on that basis, and proportionate to its importance for the future of societies everywhere.’

The 2022 IND report acts as a strategic toolkit that aligns with key documents including the [WHO Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery: 2021-2025](#) (SDNM); the [WHO State of the World's Nursing](#) and the International Centre for Nurse Migration's [Sustain and Retain in 2022 and Beyond](#). In particular, this work supports the implementation of the SDNM by providing practical guidance required by multiple stakeholders for effective realisation of their aims. It also showcases case studies as real-life examples in action. As such, it is a toolkit that provides multisectoral guidance to multiple stakeholders.

The toolkit looks at the four policy focus areas of the SDNM: education, jobs, leadership and service delivery and discusses the benefits of investing in each of these areas, the evidence of underinvestment; the expected outcomes of meaningful investment; as well as the actions required for successful delivery and monitoring of these priorities.

In addition, the IND report focuses on two vitally important strategic priorities that have come to the forefront over the last two years: investing in and prioritising the safety of health care workers and caring for the health and wellbeing of nurses.

The report examines the extra burden that the pandemic has put on health systems and on the nursing workforce; highlights the risks to and lack of protection of the profession; and presents evidence of underinvestment in nursing, globally. ICN has referred to this

combination of factors leading to an increased burden on the nursing workforce as the COVID Effect.

- While health workers represent less than 3% of the global population, they represented around 14% of COVID-19 cases. In some countries, the proportion can be as high as 35%.
- About 20% of nurses in Japan reported they had experienced discrimination or prejudice amid the spread of the virus. In the US, 64% of nurses felt overwhelmed and 67% reported difficulty in sleeping.
- Healthcare workers, especially nursing staff, are also more likely to be exposed to offensive behaviours, including sexual harassment, than other professions. In the United States, rates of violence from clients against health-care workers were estimated to be 16 times higher than any other service profession.
- In the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the risk of infection among health workers was 21 to 32 times higher than in the general adult population.
- Virtually all WHO Member States report pandemic related disruption to health services, and two-thirds (66%) have reported that health workforce-related factors are the most common causes of service disruptions.
- Due to existing nursing shortages, the ageing of the nursing workforce and the growing COVID-19 effect, ICN estimates up to 13 million nurses will be needed to fill the global nurse shortage gap in the future.

ICN has produced other resources to support IND, including: an IND logo, posters, social media banners, a virtual background, and Facebook frame and other digital tools to promote #IND2022 on social media. These can all be downloaded from the [ICN website](#). ICN has also published an interactive digital map with videos from ICN Board members discussing regional priorities and how the IND toolkit can strengthen nursing and national nursing associations in every region across the world.

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world every 12 May, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. ICN commemorates this important day each year with the production and distribution of the IND resources and evidence. To access the report and other resources, as well as information of previous INDs, please go to <https://www.icnvoicetolead.com/>

Footnotes

1. **World Health Organization (2020). *Policy Brief: Gender, equity and leadership in the global health and social workforce*.**
2. **World Health Organization (2020). *Keep health workers safe to keep patients safe*. News release, 17 September 2020.**

3. The Mainichi (2021). Japan Nurses Faced Discrimination, Quit Jobs Amid COVID-19 'First Wave': Survey – The Mainichi.
4. American Nurses Foundation (2020). Pulse on the Nation's Nurses COVID-19 Survey Series. Mental Health and Wellness Survey #2.
5. Franklin, P. (2020). Violence and harassment in the year of the nurse. *HesaMag* # 22 – 2nd semester 2020. European Trade Union Institute.
6. World Health Organization (2015). Health worker Ebola infections in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone: a preliminary report.
7. World Health Organization (2021). Second round of the national pulse survey on continuity of essential health services during the COVID-19 pandemic: January-March 2021.
8. International Council of Nurses (2021). [The Global Nursing Shortage and Nurse Retention](#).

International Nurses Day is on Florence Nightingale's 202nd Birthday



Florence Nightingale, in a photo taken in the 1860s. (Library of Congress)

The Washington Post published an article this week in their *Retropolis Series* reminding us that it was a war with Russia in the 1850's that led Florence Nightingale to modernize nursing.

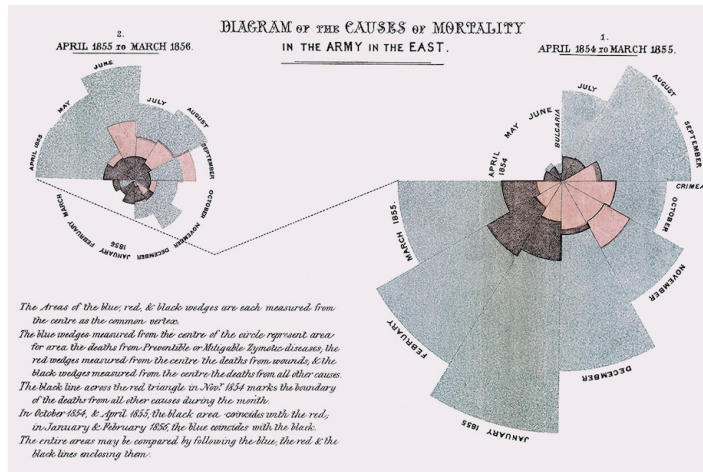
In the column, author Jess McHugh, states “As we celebrate National Nurses Week, which began Friday and ends on the 202nd anniversary of Nightingale's birth on Thursday (marked as International Nurses Day), many countries — including the United States — are facing a crisis in nursing. Much like Nightingale in the Crimean War, nurses are often forced to bear the brunt of structural failures over which they have little control. They are undervalued and overworked. The “Great Resignation” has hit the nursing field particularly hard, and nearly 200,000 nursing jobs are expected to go unfilled through 2030. A recent survey found that more than one-third of nurses plan to leave their jobs by the end of the year, and

nearly half of them cited burnout as the reason.

The covid-19 pandemic only exacerbated existing problems, particularly in hospitals, where the brunt of care often falls to nurses who are asked to work long hours for pay they consider insufficient. In demanding safety and dignity in their working conditions, nurses today are carrying on the mission begun by Nightingale: seeking to ensure that they are treated as professionals — not sacrificed as martyrs.

McHugh tells the story of Nightingale going to the Crimea with 38 nurses to care for soldiers who were dying, as she came to discover, more often from unsanitary conditions than from fatal battle wounds. "Instead of waiting for the 2,000-mile supply chain from England to deliver important goods, Nightingale went out into Constantinople — today's Istanbul — and purchased soap, towels, clean linens and fresh food from local markets. She and her team quickly set to work disinfecting the hospital. Nightingale essentially became a hospital administrator, taking charge of procurement, hygiene and nutrition." When you think about the famous Nightingale quote "NEVER LOSE AN OPPORTUNITY OF URGING A PRACTICAL BEGINNING, however small, for it is wonderful how often in such matters the mustard-seed germinates and roots itself," think about the importance of soap and water and the power of 38 nurses working together!

Florence Nightingale returned home after the war to revolutionize nursing education and practice. She was fascinated by statistics and created visual tools to increase understanding of the statistics she was studying.



Florence Nightingale's diagram of mortality in the Crimean War. (From "A Contribution to the Sanitary History of the British Army During the Late War With Russia" by Florence Nightingale.)

counterparts). As Nightingale once wrote in a letter, "WHENEVER I AM INFURIATED, I revenge myself with a new diagram."

Our images of Nightingale are generally of a sweet young woman, a saintly-looking woman with a lamp, or an elderly woman who looks remarkably like the aged Queen Victoria. Having an image of an infuriated innovator is far more inspirational in these times when we need to be bold, courageous... and maybe even infuriated!

If you have a moment, please read the entire essay. It is well worth your time. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2022/05/08/florence-nightingale-nursing-covid/>

McHugh writes of Nightingales' pioneering work in statistics: "Many now hail Nightingale as a pioneer in data visualization, and she became the first female member of the Royal Statistical Society, but her interest was rooted not simply in an intellectual pursuit. She wanted to use data in her quest for health reform. In a way that is strikingly modern, Nightingale believed patient care to be a social and political issue, understanding that high mortality and low income are closely tied (a phenomenon that persists today: Poor Americans died of covid-19 at much higher rates than their wealthy

An International Thank You from Taiwan to MNORN

駐芝加哥臺北經濟文化辦事處

TAIPEI ECONOMIC & CULTURAL OFFICE IN CHICAGO

55 West Wacker Drive, Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60601

Tel: 312-616-0100 · Fax: 312-616-1486

E-mail: teco@tecochicago.org · Website: www.taiwanembassy.org/US/CHI

Ms. Katheren Koehn
Executive Director
Minnesota Organization of Registered Nurse
753 Ashland Ave.
Saint Paul, MN 55104-7120

May 5, 2022

Dear Ms. Koehn,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the American Nurses Association's staunch support of Ms. Lian-Hua Huang of the Taiwan Nurses Association being elected as the 3rd Vice President of the International Council of Nurses (ICN). Ms. Huang's dedication and devotion to the ICN once again demonstrates Taiwan as a force for good in the international nursing community and beyond. Taiwan can be a valuable partner on the path to worldwide post-pandemic recovery. Taiwan is very much willing to continue to work with like-minded partners, such as the ANA.

Taiwan is internationally recognized for its effective and efficient measures in fighting COVID-19, and it has continued to lead in areas such as medical research, vaccination rates, and digital technologies for monitoring domestic outbreaks. Taiwan has been capable and willing to share its healthcare expertise and knowledge with like-minded partners in the interest of global public health. It is thus most unfortunate that the World Health Organization (WHO) continually excludes Taiwan, based on political considerations, from its mechanisms and meetings, including its annual World Health Assembly (WHA) that is due to convene this May 22-28. In the interest of international health cooperation, it is imperative that Taiwan be allowed to take part as an observer in WHO's meetings and mechanisms and be included in the WHA as an observer so as to fulfill the WHO's goal of "Health for All."

With International Nurses Day just around the corner, on behalf of the Taiwanese American community in Minnesota and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago, I thank you and the nurses in our communities for your compassion, bravery and dedication in the fight against COVID-19. Your service and support are needed more than ever during this trying time of the pandemic.

Sincerely yours,



Justin Lee
Deputy Director General