ICN Wellness Centre in Swaziland celebrates decade of support to wellbeing of healthcare workers

Geneva, Switzerland; 19 September 2016 - September 2016 marks the 10th anniversary of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Wellness Centre in Swaziland. ICN and its partners are proud to celebrate this project’s significant contribution to the wellbeing of Swaziland’s healthcare workers during a three-day event held from 14 to 16 September.

The ICN Wellness Centre programme aims to strengthen health systems through the provision of quality comprehensive health services for all cadres of healthcare workers and up to four of their immediate family members. Since 2006, it has continually striven to develop and provide an innovative model of healthcare tailored to the specific needs and challenges encountered by professionals in the health sector and especially those located in sub-Saharan Africa.

The ICN initiative in Swaziland, a first of its kind, brings together international healthcare specialists including: the Ministry of Health of Swaziland; the Swaziland Nurses Association (SNA); Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD); the Danish Nurses Organisation (DNØ); and the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

“ICN values the success the Centre has encountered among healthcare professionals in Swaziland, as a trusted place to receive quality confidential and patient-centred care”, said Dr Frances Hughes, Chief Executive Officer of ICN said. “We will continue to create such projects and expand them in remote and rural areas. They are key to improving the country’s health crisis, and curbing the human resource dramatic issue by improving the retention of the health workforce and strengthening the quality of healthcare services and welfare of the health work force of Swaziland.”

Based in Manzini the entirely nurse-managed and nurse-staffed centre has become an important source of primary healthcare services and psychological care, home based care and vaccination for healthcare workers and their families. It addresses the key factors affecting their health, such as their heightened risks of contracting illnesses in a setting where HIV infection rates are the highest in the world, along with a high burden of TB, Hepatitis B infections and high levels of other co-morbidities. Put under considerable strain physically and mentally, healthcare workers have to perform in extremely poor working conditions with limited resources. In caring for and valuing its hard-working healthcare personnel, the Swaziland Wellness Centre has been successful in addressing these issues.

To date, the Swaziland Wellness Centre has cared for 5,200 clients with more than 28,200 visits and the Centre’s staff has grown significantly from 5 employees in 2006 to 12 devoted staff members in 2016, thanks to the engagement of the Ministry of Health notably.
The concept initiated through the Swaziland Wellness Centre has been a model, opening the way to a wider network of ICN supported Wellness Centres in Lesotho, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia.

Note for Editors

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

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