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Time to Deliver!

WHO High-Level Commission releases report on Noncommunicable Disease, recognising key role of nurses

Geneva, Switzerland, 1 June 2018 – The International Council of Nurses ICN) is pleased to welcome the final report of the World Health Organization (WHO) Independent Global High-Level Commission on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) which was released today.

Annette Kennedy, ICN President, who serves on the NCD Commission, said “I am delighted to welcome the report. I welcome the explicit acknowledgement and recommendation for the need to mobilize and invest in nurses in order to make substantial progress on addressing NCDs. Recognising, investing and mobilizing the nursing workforce will lead to real and lasting change in individual and population health and wellbeing.”

The report refers to models of care (many of which are now nurse-led), enabling nurses to work to their full scope, recognising nurses’ role in terms of health promotion, health literacy, disease prevention and management; it recognises the need for financial support and resources.

“Within a multi-disciplinary health workforce, nurses have especially crucial roles to play in health promotion and health literacy, and in the prevention and management of NCDs. With the right knowledge, skills, opportunities, and financial support, nurses are uniquely placed to act as effective practitioners, health coaches, spokespersons, and knowledge suppliers for patients and families throughout the life course. “(p.21)’

ICN is also pleased to read the Commission’s recognition of “the 40 million health workers globally, including nurses and other members of the interdisciplinary team have an important role in advocating for the Commission’s recommendations based on their extensive
knowledge and experience and because of the trust placed in them by Governments and the public.

The report recommends the six priority areas of work:

**Recommendation 1: Start from the top: political leadership and responsibility, from capitals to villages**
- Heads of State and Government, not Ministers of Health only, should oversee the process of creating ownership at national level of NCDs and mental health.
- Political leaders at all levels, including the subnational level, for example, city mayors, should take responsibility for comprehensive local actions, together with the health sector, that can advance action against NCDs and mental disorders.

**Recommendation 2: Prioritize and scale up**
- Governments should identify and implement a specific set of priorities within the overall NCD and mental health agenda, based on public health needs.

**Recommendation 3: Embed and expand: NCDs within health systems and UHC**
- Governments should reorient health systems to include health promotion and the prevention and control of NCDs and mental health services in their UHC policies and plans, according to national contexts and needs.

**Recommendation 4: Collaborate and regulate**
- Governments should increase effective regulation, appropriate engagement with the private sector, academia, civil society, and communities, building on a whole-of-society approach to NCDs, and share experiences and challenges, including policy models that work.

**Recommendation 5: Finance**
- Governments and the international community should develop a new economic paradigm for funding action on NCDs and mental health.

**Recommendation 6: Act for accountability**
- Governments should strengthen accountability to their citizens for action on NCDs.

The Commission was established by WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus to identify innovative ways to curb the world’s biggest causes of death and extend life expectancy for millions of people. It aims to support ongoing political efforts to accelerate action on cardiovascular disease, cancers, diabetes and respiratory disease, as well as reducing suffering from mental health issues and the impacts of violence and injuries. The final report will advise Dr Tedros on bold and practical recommendations, and new opportunities, for countries to accelerate progress on NCDs, in line with the agenda for Sustainable Development target of a one-third reduction in premature NCD deaths by 2030.
NCDs kill 15 million people between the ages of 30 and 69 each year. Low- and lower-middle income countries are particularly affected by NCDs with almost 50% of premature deaths from NCDs occurring in these countries. Nurses make an important contribution to tackling NCDs and, as the largest group of healthcare professionals, are the key providers of NCD prevention, treatment and management. Nurses, as the point of first contact, are well positioned to detect, treat and refer patients with NCDs as well as to provide information, education and counselling to the public on prevention of NCDs.

NCDs are a strategic priority area for ICN whose vision is to build the capacity and capability of the nursing profession to support global efforts to prevent, control and manage NCDs in all settings and service levels. ICN is working to ensure that nursing is engaged in international, national and country specific NCD Action Plans; strengthening nursing leadership and fostering of skills in intersectoral partnerships and health promotion; and improving community health literacy and self-management skills for people living with NCDs. ICN also recognises and advocates for ongoing development and recognition of advanced nursing practice.

ICN has been actively involved in providing recommendations to support the Commission, and has strongly advocated for the inclusion of a nurse on the technical expert group as well as providing several innovative recommendations for consideration by the Commission. ICN also lobbied its members to take part in the web-based consultation which was held in May, in order to ensure the inclusion of nurses and the health workforce in the final report. Calling on NNA representatives from National Nursing Associations (NNAs) who were present at the ICN-ICM-WHO Triad meetings in Geneva 16-19 May, ICN was delighted to see that there were a significant number of responses to the consultation from nurses including NNAs from 20 countries, whose contributions made a positive impact on the final report.

For more information, go to: www.icn.ch/what-we-do/WHO-Independant-High-level-Commission-on-NCDs/

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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