

Planetary Health and Climate Change

Statement on behalf of the ICN Nursing Student Steering Group and the ICN Alliance of Student and Early Career Nurses

21 May 2025 – We, student and early career nurses, stand united in our deep concern for the health of our planet and the profound implication this has for health and the future of nursing practice. We are increasingly aware that the climate crisis and environmental degradation are not distant threats, they are rapidly shaping our clinical environments, influencing the communities we serve and affecting our mental health and well-being. As future professionals and emerging leaders, we carry the responsibility to be part of the solution.

We believe that nurses have a critical role in this transformation – and that it must begin with how nurses are educated and supported today.

We advocate for and strongly support the following:

- **Student and early career nurses should be recognized as essential contributors to advancing planetary health.** We strongly believe that student and early career nurses are vital contributors to the future of health care including the transition to sustainable and equitable health systems. To support this, it is essential to invest in our leadership development, creating pathways for active participation in sustainability initiatives and valuing our insights in education, clinical practice and policy discussions. Our proximity to the frontlines and our future in the profession position us to lead change with urgency, innovation and care.
- **Planetary health should be a core component in nursing education.** In line with the ICN Code of Ethics, which calls on nurses to preserve, sustain and protect the natural environment, nursing education should equip future nurses from the outset with the knowledge, skills and confidence to address climate change, ecological disruption and environmental injustice.
- **Nursing curricula should reflect the realities of the climate crisis** and prepare future nurses to advocate for sustainable, equitable and climate-resilient health systems across all areas of practice. These teachings will encourage environmentally responsible care by reducing waste, conserving

energy, and integrating sustainability into clinical education and quality improvement. Where possible, clinical placements should prioritize health care settings committed to net-zero goals and integrating carbon footprint awareness into everyday clinical decision-making. Teaching quality improvement through a sustainability lens will equip future nurses to deliver safe, high-quality care that also reduces environmental impact.

We offer our perspective as the future of nursing – with hope, integrity and a deep sense of responsibility. We are ready to learn, lead and act – grounded in the ethics of our profession and inspired by the vision of a healthy and sustainable world. **Because there is no health without a healthy planet and there is no future of health without the education of nurses who are prepared to protect it. Nurse the planet. Heal the future.**

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