

## **Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly**

### **Item 12.5 Primary healthcare**

May 2026

The International Council of Nurses (ICN), representing 30 million nurses worldwide, commends WHO's leadership in advancing primary health care reforms to achieve Universal Health Coverage and reaffirms that nurses are central to this objective. As the largest and most widely distributed health workforce, nurses strengthen primary health care, ensure continuity of care, and address health inequities.

ICN highlights the effectiveness of nurse-led models, including rural clinics and community mental health and vaccination programmes, in expanding access to high-quality, cost-effective services. However, chronic underinvestment in the nursing workforce limits their scale and impact and slows progress towards UHC.

ICN urges Member States to invest in creating a PHC-enabled nursing workforce with decent working conditions, safety and protection, career opportunities, equal pay, and measures to prevent burnout and work-related mental health challenges.