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Item 10 Roadmap for action on artificial intelligence in health in the WHO European Region 2026–2033

The International Council of Nurses (ICN), representing more than 30 million nurses worldwide, and the European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations (EFNNMA), representing the nursing and midwifery professions in the WHO European Region, support the roadmap for action on artificial intelligence (AI) in health.

AI offers opportunities to improve health care, support clinical decision-making, reduce administrative burdens and strengthen health service delivery. However, its development and use must be guided by patient safety, human rights, equity and professional accountability.

AI must serve people and strengthen, not diminish, the human relationships at the heart of care. It also carries significant risks, including algorithmic bias, discrimination, breaches of privacy, excessive surveillance and the erosion of professional judgement. AI must not be used to justify unsafe staffing, inappropriate workforce substitution or the loss of essential human contact.

Nurses and midwives are central to responsible digital transformation. As the professionals working closely with people across health and care settings, they must be meaningfully involved in the design, procurement, implementation and evaluation of AI technologies. Their clinical expertise and understanding of patient needs are essential to ensuring that innovation delivers genuine improvements in safety, quality and equity.

Human oversight, professional judgement and clear accountability must remain fundamental. Responsibilities must be appropriately shared among technology developers, suppliers, regulators, health authorities, employers and

health professionals. Companies that develop, supply, and operate these technology platforms must themselves be underpinned by ethical practice. Practitioners must not be unfairly held responsible for system failures beyond their reasonable knowledge or control. People must be informed when AI materially influences their care, and have appropriate opportunities to question decisions.

ICN and EFNNMA urge Member States to:

1. Ensure meaningful nursing and midwifery leadership and representation in national AI and digital health governance, including through Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers and professional associations.
2. Invest in digital and AI competencies throughout nursing and midwifery education, professional development and leadership preparation.
3. Require clinical co-design, independent safety evaluation and ongoing monitoring of AI technologies, with particular attention to bias, equity, privacy and patient outcomes.
4. Protect professional judgement and safe practice, including clear accountability arrangements and the right of practitioners to question, report and escalate unsafe AI-supported decisions without retaliation.
5. Ensure equitable access to digital infrastructure and AI-enabled care, with particular attention to underserved populations and people at risk of digital exclusion.

ICN, its national member associations and EFNNMA stand ready to support WHO and Member States in ensuring that artificial intelligence strengthens health systems while protecting the dignity, safety and rights of patients and health professionals.