



76 th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, 27–29 October 2026

Item 11 Toward a strategy and action plan for tackling noncommunicable diseases and advancing well-being through health promotion in the WHO European Region 2028–2037

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, welcome the development of this strategy and action plan.

A strong, well-supported nursing and midwifery workforce is fundamental to tackling noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and advancing health and well-being. Nurses and midwives are central to health promotion, prevention, screening, early detection, chronic disease management and continuity of care. Their close relationships with individuals, families and communities are particularly important in underserved populations and crisis settings.

Effective NCD prevention also requires action on the social and commercial determinants of health, alongside accessible, integrated and people-centred primary health care.

ICN's report *Nursing and Primary Health Care: Towards the Realization of Universal Health Coverage* highlights the contribution of nurse-led and team-based care to improving access, continuity and quality. Advanced practice nurses and nurse practitioners can further strengthen NCD prevention and management, particularly in underserved and rural communities, when supported to practise to their full competencies and authorised scope.

However, these ambitions cannot be realised without sufficient, appropriately educated, supported and empowered nurses and midwives.

ICN and EFNNMA urge Member States to:

1. Invest in sustainable nursing and midwifery workforces, including education, recruitment, retention, safe staffing and professional development, particularly in primary and community health care.
2. Accelerate implementation of WHO's Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery 2021–2025, extended to 2030, focusing on education, jobs, leadership and service delivery.
3. Strengthen nurse-led and multidisciplinary models of care, enabling nurses and midwives to practise to their full competencies and authorised scope, particularly in NCD prevention, early intervention and integrated chronic disease management.
4. Ensure meaningful nursing and midwifery leadership and representation in the development, implementation and evaluation of national NCD and health promotion strategies, including through Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers and national professional associations.
5. Expand equitable access to digital health technologies, including artificial intelligence, telemedicine and electronic health records, with nursing and midwifery leaders adequately resourced to lead digital transformation and frontline professionals actively involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of new technologies to ensure safety, effectiveness and equitable access.

Investing in nursing and midwifery is essential to building resilient health systems, improving population health, strengthening economies and advancing health equity.

ICN, its national member associations and EFNNMA stand ready to support WHO and Member States in translating these commitments into action