

World Tuberculosis Day reminds us that it's time to end TB

Geneva, Switzerland; 24 March 2020 – On World Tuberculosis Day, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) agrees – It is Time to End TB - #ItstimetoendTB.

As the world battles against the COVID-19 pandemic, World TB Day reminds us of another dangerous respiratory disease that nurses are working tirelessly to eradicate.

This year's theme for the day, *It's Time to End TB*, is intended to bring continued attention to TB, and hold heads of state, ministers, health professionals and community leaders accountable for the key commitments already made to end TB once and for all.

In the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, the International Council of Nurses would like to emphasise the crucial role of nurses in the fight to end TB.

ICN President Annette Kennedy said:

“TB is a scourge that affects nearly 10 million people every year, killing around 1.2 million. Yet with concentrated effort it could be eradicated within ten years. Nurses are the key to getting on top of TB and eliminating its effects for generations to come. We need more specialist TB nurses in the areas of the world where this disease is most rife so that it can be confined to the history books where it belongs.”

ICN's TB project provides practice-based courses in countries with a high burden of TB and drug-resistant TB (DR-TB), where ICN has a strong working relationship with the local national nurses' associations.

ICN TB project director Carrie Tudor said training experienced nurses in the prevention, care and treatment of TB and DR-TB, and getting them to pass on their knowledge to other healthcare staff, is the key to improving the care of those with TB.

Dr Tudor said: “Nurses are uniquely placed to help eradicate TB from the world once and for all.”

The ICN TB/MDR-TB project has trained 2,300 nurses through ‘Training for Transformation’ courses in 17 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Russian Federation.

These nurses have in turn rolled out the training to more than 179,300 nurses, doctors, allied health workers and community members, which equates to each nurse training approximately 78 additional people.

One nurse from Uganda said:

“Nurses spend the most time with patients, so when empowered with knowledge on treating TB, it is a benefit to all. It leads to good adherence, good outcomes and a healthy community for all. Through this, we will reach our goal - a TB-free world in 2030.”

Dr Tudor added:

“Nurses are on the front lines every day across the globe. They play a critical role in improving case detection, initiating patients on appropriate treatment, providing ongoing support to patients and their families and improving treatment outcomes.

‘Nurses account for half of all healthcare workers globally, and this percentage is higher in many parts of the world most affected by TB, such as sub-Saharan Africa. In many places

around the world nurses are the only source of care. ICN agrees that “It’s Time to End TB” and nurses can make that happen.”

Ms Kennedy concluded:

“ICN supports all nurses, but today I want to recognise those who are working on the frontlines of TB care around the world - their patients will be especially vulnerable during this pandemic. ICN strongly urges governments to work to ensure more nurses are available to meet this global health need.”

Note to editors

TB continues to affect nearly 10 million people worldwide every year with roughly 1.2 million people dying from the disease - more than 3,000 people die every day from this curable disease.

TB remains the leading cause of death from an infectious disease and kills more people than HIV/AIDS. Of an estimated 500,000 people diagnosed with DR-TB in 2018, only one in three received treatment and of those, only 56% were successfully treated. Deaths due to DR-TB account for nearly one-third of all deaths due to antimicrobial resistance (Source: WHO Global TB Report 2018).

The funding for the ICN TB Project will end at the end of March 2020 and ICN is grateful to Eli Lilly and United Way Worldwide for all their support to train nurses on the front lines in the fight against TB.

Read the inspiring stories of nurses working with TB patients – from [South Africa](#), [Mozambique](#), [South Africa](#)

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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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