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International Council of Nurses highlights top priorities to beat COVID-19

Geneva, Switzerland, 9 April 2020 – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) today published its [COVID-19 list of top priorities](#) based on the information and feedback received from its National Nursing Associations and their nurses on the frontline fighting the coronavirus.

These top priorities collectively form a call to action demanding that every part of society including governments, healthcare organisations and businesses pull together to beat the virus. These are practical steps that every country should include in their preparedness and response plans. ICN believes that only by working together will humanity be able to achieve what is necessary to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and eventually defeat it, while maintaining the best interests and wellbeing of our nursing workforce.

With more than one million cases of COVID-19 recorded around the world, nurses and other healthcare workers have stood firm against the onslaught of the virus and saved many thousands of lives. But they have been cruelly exposed to danger because of a lack of sufficient appropriate and high-quality personal protective equipment (PPE). Nurses' lives are being put at risk, and some have been lost, because of failures in the supply chain of essential equipment that can stop the spread of this terrible disease.

ICN calls on all governments to show leadership and coordinate the PPE supply system across all sectors. They must safeguard cooperation across borders to ensure that equipment goes to where the need is greatest in a timely manner.

ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton said:

“Unless there is resolute action, more nurses will become infected and unable to work, and sadly, more nurses and patients will die. We must see immediate steps to develop cooperation across borders so that PPE reaches the people who are literally putting their lives on the line to save the rest of us from the coronavirus. There is no time for debate about this – we need immediate action now.”

ICN's list of [COVID-19 top priorities](#) is not only a call to action but also provides a guide to help NNAs and other nursing organisations to focus on some of the important issues nurses are facing as they respond to the current worldwide crisis.

ICN President Annette Kennedy said:

“This call to action is about helping nurses get through this terrible situation as quickly and safely as possible but also acts as blueprint for shaping future global healthcare policies that put nurses front and centre. We can no longer afford to let their knowledge and leadership skills go to waste, otherwise we risk going from one crisis to the next.”

The 12 main priorities in ICN's COVID-19 Call to Action are:

1. Urgently prioritise ready access to sufficient quantity of high-quality and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for nurses and other healthcare workers
2. Ensure all nurses have appropriate evidence-based infection prevention and control training and the latest COVID-19-specific guidance and training
3. Protect the health and wellbeing of nurses and other healthcare workers
4. Rapidly implement/scale-up comprehensive surveillance systems to track and investigate healthcare worker infection
5. Ensure the financial protection and compensation of nurses
6. Provide a safe and effective Registration and Regulatory response when rapidly expanding the nursing workforce
7. Ensure a safe and effective deployment of nursing staff to areas of high demand and high complexity as the need arises
8. Encourage, develop and support new models of care and innovation
9. Demonstrate public support and recognise the value of nurses to society
10. Capitalise on nursing leadership
11. Develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated COVID-19 public health strategy with active engagement of nurses
12. Learn from the COVID-19 pandemic to be prepared for the future

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Note to Editors

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.

For more information please contact Gyorgy Madarasz, Press Officer at madarasz@icn.ch
Tel: +41 22 908 01 16

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