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International Council of Nurses launches new Advanced Practice Nursing guidelines and calls for increased recognition and support for these roles to help fix fragile healthcare systems

Geneva, Switzerland, 16 April 2020 – At this time when nursing expertise and experience are being recognised and acknowledged around the globe, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) has published detailed [guidelines](#) on Advanced Practice Nursing (APN).

The promotion of APN is one of the most efficient and effective ways to address the fault lines in our healthcare systems revealed by the current COVID-19 pandemic. APN helps countries deliver high-quality, safe, affordable, patient-focused care around the world.

Developed by an international panel of nursing experts, the guidelines aim to provide a clearer and more common understanding of the components of APN to key stakeholders, the public and other healthcare professionals. They assist countries in the development of policies, frameworks and strategies that will support APN initiatives around the globe.

The guidelines acknowledge the varying levels and pace of development of APN in different parts of the world and provide common principles and practical examples of international best practice to help foster rapid progress in the provision of APN services.

ICN President Annette Kennedy said:

“Since its inception in 1899, ICN has always taken the lead on professional development for nurses, and these latest guidelines continue that process at a moment in history when they have never been more necessary. Advanced Practice Nurses, educated to Master’s level, can effectively respond to patients’ needs regarding health promotion and prevention, and management of disease, their response to the coronavirus makes a compelling case. APNs are an efficient resource to address the challenges of providing accessible, safe and affordable care. We have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic how essential nurses’ leadership skills are at dealing with a major crisis as well as the everyday.”

ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton said:

“COVID-19 has revealed the weakness and fragility of many of our healthcare systems. There is no single solution, but we would be missing a major trick if we did not recognise that APN represents a huge opportunity to develop and grow strong health systems. APN has a leading role to play in the prevention and containment of diseases, as well as providing first contact and long-term care, whilst benefiting vulnerable groups that other healthcare professionals may not reach.

‘As a Co-Chair of the recently released WHO [State of the World’s Nursing report](#), we identified convincing evidence on both the care and cost effectiveness of these roles. ICN calls on governments and healthcare authorities to use the new ICN APN guidelines to support nurses to work to their full scope of practice and design and implement, at scale, more nurse-led services.’

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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.

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