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## **Immediate and serious threat: ICN calls on WHO member states to collect and share data on health worker COVID-19 infection rates and deaths**

**Geneva, Switzerland, 18 May 2020** - At the start of the 73rd WHO World Health Assembly, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) is calling on member states to take urgent action to collect and share data on COVID-19 infections and deaths amongst health workers. In a statement to the WHA members, ICN described the lack of a systematic collection of such data by governments as “an immediate and serious threat to the safety of the public and to one our most precious resources, nurses.”

ICN says that by collecting this data and centralizing it with WHO, the lives of both nurses and the public would be saved, and we would be better prepared to fight the potential second wave of the virus.

ICN is collecting its own data on these statistics through its member associations and is alarmed by infection rates above 20% in some countries and the deaths of at least 360 nurses. However, ICN believes the situation may be far more grave than these figures suggest and that its likely hundreds of thousands of health workers have been infected and thousands of nurse deaths may have gone unreported.

ICN CEO Howard Catton said: “We implore the member states of the WHO, meeting virtually over the next 48 hours, to take immediate collective action and prioritize the collection of this data. We fear that our own ICN findings may be only the tip of the iceberg concerning both infection rates and the number of deaths because this data has simply not been collected systematically by all governments. Public applause for nurses must not be used by governments to drown out their own responsibility to safeguard them. We are not demanding data for data’s sake; it will be used to guide policy and strategy to save lives and defeat the virus.”

Read ICN full statement to WHA [here](#).

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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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