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Revised ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses reflects lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic

Nurses' working conditions, data protection and nurses' role in global health highlighted in new interactive publication

Geneva, Switzerland, 20 October 2021 – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) today launched its newly revised *Code of Ethics for Nurses*, a statement of the ethical values, responsibilities and professional accountabilities of nurses that defines and guides ethical nursing practice within the different roles nurses assume. The Code has served as the standard for nurses worldwide since it was first adopted in 1953.

ICN President Annette Kennedy said:

"We are launching the new *Code on Global Ethics Day* to highlight the changes we see in nurses' working environments, the challenges they face and the ethical dilemmas which COVID-19 has brought to the forefront.

'Used as a guide by nurses in everyday choices, the revised *Code* highlights the need to protect and support nurses and ensure they have the appropriate education, training and resources to provide the highest quality of care to all patients.'

The 2021 revised edition has four principal elements that provide a framework for ethical conduct: nurses and patients or other people requiring care or services, nurses and practice, nurses and the profession, and nurses and global health. The *Code* also contains charts to assist nurses to translate the standards into action.

The *ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses* is regularly reviewed and revised in response to the realities of nursing and health care in a changing society. The 2021 version underwent a full and robust review by an Expert Steering Group, ICN Board members and ICN staff prior to undergoing translation into Spanish and French. A German version will be launched on Friday by ICN's member national nursing associations in Austria (Österreichischer Gesundheits und. Krankenpflegeverband), Germany (DBfK Bundesverband) and Switzerland (Schweizer Berufsverband der Pflegefachfrauen und Pflegefachmänner SBK – ASI).

The *ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses* provides ethical guidance in relation to nurses' roles, duties, responsibilities, behaviours, professional judgement and relationships with patients, other people who are receiving nursing care or services, co-workers and allied professionals. *The Code* is foundational and is to be used in combination with countries' existing laws, regulations and professional standards that govern nursing practice.

The 2021 [Code of Ethics for Nurses](#) is available on the ICN website.

Please find video presentations on the new ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses from ICN Board members, [Lisa Little](#) and [Roswitha Koch](#), and the ICN Chief Nurse [Michelle Acorn](#)

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Notes 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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