



2020

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE NURSE AND THE MIDWIFE

International Council of Nurses calls on heads of state to back The Year of the Nurse and Midwife

Geneva, Switzerland, 12 December 2019 – Ahead of the 2020 International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and its partners have urged heads of state to get behind the Year, which will be both a celebration of nursing and a call to action.

Heads of state are asked to recognise the essential work of nurses beginning with their New Year messages and show the commitment of their country to advancing nursing as a key driver to reaching Universal Health Care.

This week with its partners, the World Health Organisation, Nursing Now, UNFPA and the International Council of Midwives, the ICN has also launched [a visual identity for the Year of the Nurse and related materials](#).

The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, a global celebration that is intended to raise the profile of the professions and attract a new generation into the nursing family.

The letter to heads of state highlights the unique contribution that nurses make to healthcare around the world, and the serious threat that nursing shortages pose to the achievement of Universal Health Coverage, which is being [recognised today](#) by the United Nations, if governments do not act swiftly to recruit and retain millions more nurses.

The letter signed by ICN President Annette Kennedy, as well as other leaders, including the Director General of the WHO, is one of a string of initiatives being led by Ms. Kennedy and ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton in the run up to 2020, to ensure nursing is on the map.

Mr Catton said: “Nurses are at the forefront of the push towards Universal Health Coverage because they are often the first point of contact when someone needs medical attention. That’s why the Year of the Nurse is a rallying call for investment, education, recruitment and retention of healthcare workers. Only with them is the goal of Universal Health Care achievable.

‘We make that point with our partners in the letter to heads of state which is also a reminder to them of the debt that all societies owe to their nurses. Day in, day out, nurses care for people and their families in a way that no other health professionals can match.

‘They can only continue to do this, however, if they are present in sufficient numbers, if they are adequately supported in their work, and if they are properly remunerated for their contribution to the societies, they live in.

‘We want the designation of 2020 as the Year of the Nurse to be a wake-up call to politicians and other world leaders that they cannot afford to ignore.’

From next year, ICN and its member National Nursing Associations will be marking the year-long celebrations through numerous stories and events that will be listed on a new Year of the Nurse portal on the ICN website, to be launched on January 1st:

- In the New Year, ICN, in collaboration with Jhpiego and Nursing Now, will be launching a Nurse Photography Competition that will provide a pictorial record of the reality of nursing throughout the Year of the Nurse.
- Early next year, ICN will also publish new guidelines on Advanced Practice Nursing, outlining diverse elements such as core components of the APN. The new guidelines will promote a common vision to continue to enable a greater understanding by the international nursing and healthcare communities for the development of roles commonly identified as clinical nurse specialist and nurse practitioner.
- An important milestone will be the publication of the first ever WHO *State of the World’s Nursing* report in April. The report, which is co-chaired by ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton, will provide a snapshot of the global nursing workforce and include vital data that will be used for years to come as a benchmark to determine how much progress has been made in increasing and enhancing the nursing workforce.
- 12 May 2020 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florene Nightingale and is also International Nurses Day. Recently, ICN launched its International Nurses Day theme, [logo and posters](#). Further resources, including case studies, videos and a report, will be launched early in 2020 for use throughout the year to showcase the work of nurses and their vital contribution to healthcare globally.
- On 30 August, the 11TH ICN NP/APN Network Conference will convene in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, where the world’s Nurse Practitioners and Advanced Nurse Practitioners will meet to discuss how nursing’s ever-widening scope of practice is creating lifechanging health improvements for patients that are cost-effective and better than existing services.
- The year will culminate in a special [Nightingale2020](#) conference in London to celebrate Florence Nightingale’s legacy.

ICN will play a major role in ensuring the voice of nurses is at the heart of health policy, and that the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife has a lasting legacy.

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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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