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## **ICN calls for fundamental change in healthcare funding to achieve WHO's aim of Universal Health Coverage**

**Geneva, Switzerland, 11 December 2020**– On Universal Health Coverage Day (12 December), the International Council of Nurses (ICN) is backing WHO's plea for governments to massively invest in healthcare systems so that Healthcare for All can finally become a reality.

But ICN says fundamental change is needed in the funding, design and management of healthcare systems in the post-COVID-19 period if the basic health needs of everyone on the planet are to be met.

COVID-19 has revealed the fault lines in our healthcare systems, with some being grossly underfunded and ill-prepared for a global pandemic.

What is needed now is a monumental investment in healthcare that is used intelligently to put health at the heart of everything governments do, so that the legacy of the pandemic will be the provision of strong, well-resourced and equitable health systems that leave no one behind.

ICN President Annette Kennedy said:

“In 2020 we have seen how massive multinational cooperation and investment have reduced the time needed to develop safe and effective vaccines from many years to just ten months. What is needed is a similar level of commitment to funding the everyday services that people need to achieve optimum health.

“If more than 50 years ago the human race could put a man on the moon, providing universal health coverage here on earth should be a walk in the park. Funding accessible healthcare for all should be the lasting legacy of our struggles with COVID-19, the ultimate achievement of our generation, our equivalent of putting a man on the moon.”

ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton said:

“Universal Health Coverage can become a reality if governments commit to properly funding healthcare services. Those services, many of which can be nurse led, will make a fundamental difference to the people who will receive them, and protect the wellbeing of future generations.

“We know the world does not have the healthcare workers that it needs. The ICN/WHO [State of the World's Nursing report](#) revealed the size of the nursing shortage at six million and that was before the effects of COVID-19, including a depleted and exhausted workforce and the increase in number of nurses seeking to retire. Therefore, we may be needing to recruit, retain and replace more than ten million nurses in the coming years.

“The pandemic has disrupted many people's lives and left many unexpectedly unemployed. One way to meet the urgent need to train more nurses would be for governments to set up [Health Education Retraining Opportunity funds](#) to educate that newly available workforce and train them to be the much-needed registered nurses of the future.

‘The pandemic has taught us that time is precious, and so are the health and the freedoms that we so readily took for granted. Nurses are well placed to lead the local, public health and patient-focused services that are needed to protect the health of everyone on the planet. 2020 has given governments the clearest lesson they have ever had about the actions they must take. It is time to make Universal Health Coverage and Healthcare for All a reality, once and for all.’

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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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