

International Council of Nurses virtual Congress closes with rousing speech by newly elected President Pamela Cipriano announcing her presidential watchword ‘Influence’

Geneva, Switzerland, 4 November 2021– The International Council of Nurses’ (ICN) newly elected 29th President Pamela Cipriano has closed the ICN virtual Congress with a rousing speech that introduced her presidential watchword ‘Influence’.

ICN’s virtual Congress, which was held in partnership with the Emirates Nursing Association, ran from 2-4 November and attracted more than 5,000 delegates from around the world.

In her closing speech, ICN President Pamela Cipriano began by praising her predecessor, Annette Kennedy, for her steadfast leadership. She said Ms Kennedy had advanced the goals of ICN and been a striking presence in strategic discussions with the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations and other global power organisations, making sure that the voice of nursing was heard at the highest levels internationally and globally. Dr Cipriano said that Ms Kennedy’s receipt of the WHO Director General’s Health Leaders Award for outstanding leadership in global health today, was richly deserved and a testament of her dedication to nursing everywhere.



Dr Cipriano called on nurses to continue in the defeat of the pandemic and said their unity in the coming months and years would show the world how vital nurses and nursing are to the physical, mental, social and economic wellbeing of everyone.

She spoke of her pride to be the leader of the world’s nurses, who work every day to care for others, sometimes to their own detriment.

Dr Cipriano said:

“I’m proud to represent the voice of the 28 million nurses who, every day, care for others, sometimes sacrificing their own health and welfare. I want to thank President Annette Kennedy for her steadfast leadership over the past four years - she has been a fearless advocate for the protections nurses need now, and into the future.

‘My watchword is influence. I chose "influence" because it is both an action and an outcome. It is the power to change or affect someone or something directly or indirectly. Influence does not force change to happen. Rather, influence relies on persuasion, and the ability to sway another’s thinking or actions. It is through the power of our positions as knowledgeable decision makers and problem solvers, advocates and passionate professionals, that we have influence and can influence others.

‘We influence the care of patients and families by demonstrating compassion, educating them and gaining their trust and cooperation. We influence our nurse colleagues, physicians and other clinicians by sharing expert knowledge and commitment to meet the unique needs of others. We influence our lawmakers by advocating for actions that safeguard nurses. We influence our communities by teaching practices to promote health and prevent diseases. We influence changes in health care by raising our voices and convincing others to do the right thing. We influence the public by being courageous. We influence our profession by never backing down, even in the face of adversity.’

Dr Cipriano spoke about the formidable challenges the world faces, including stopping the pandemic, addressing the physical protections and mental health needs of nurses, and the healing that must occur in all of our countries.

She continued:

‘Never before has the world looked up to nurses with such high expectations. We do not bear this work alone. But as healers, we know what will be important that our words and our actions are at the forefront of recovery efforts. We do look to the future to continue to build and strengthen ICN through leadership development, empowerment, garnering of new resources, and always being at decision making tables to drive changes for health equity and prosperity.’

‘Our influence will boost solidarity not only in the ranks of nurses, but also among other healthcare system leaders. We are guided by our knowledge, our passion and our humility - the right ingredients for influence. I look forward to joining with you to be an unstoppable force for health.’
Outgoing President Annette Kennedy thanked the ICN Board, its Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton and ICN’s staff for the support they had given her during her tenure. She spoke of her pride in the honour of being able to lead ICN during such a difficult time, in which nurses everywhere have responded so effectively. She thanked all the inspiring nurses she has met during the past four years, and encouraged nurses everywhere to have confidence in their abilities, and to let the world know about them.

‘As I hand over to your new president, Pam Cipriano, I can honestly say the organisation is in great shape. Pam was my first Vice-President and a wonderful support. I know that Pam and the new Board will continue to build on what has been achieved, and I wish them every success.’

The final act of Congress was to officially announce the Canadian Nurses Association as the hosts of the next Congress, which will be held in Montreal in 2023.

Note for 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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