



71st WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Provisional agenda item:

12.2 Physical activity for health

May 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the over 20 million nurses worldwide.

Considering the significant role that physical inactivity plays in premature death from non-communicable diseases (NCDs), there is a strong need to develop global recommendations addressing the links between the frequency, duration, intensity, type and total amount of physical activity needed to prevent NCDs such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and mental illness.

Mobilising the nursing workforce to address NCD prevention, treatment and management is a powerful way to tackle the growing disease burden. Nurses are driving forward primary health care (PHC) and are well-positioned to promote physical activity in an integrated manner. For example, school health nurses can promote increased physical activity in the context of family, school, and community activities for children and youth. Nurses in PHC settings can integrate physical activity into treatment and rehabilitation plans and in older adults, community activities that integrate physical activity can prevent frailty and disability.

Physical activity has wide reaching effects including health, social and economic benefits. ICN is concerned with the significant inequities that exist with girls and women; older adults; poor people; and people with disabilities, living rurally and with chronic conditions all having less access to opportunities for physical activity. Particular attention should be paid to these groups as these inequities lead to growing health inequalities.

ICN supports the need for a paradigm shift with regards to physical activity and believes that it should be seen as a key tool for health promotion, disease prevention and in the overall holistic care of individuals and communities.

ICN warmly welcomes the global recommendations on physical activity for health and will work to develop inclusive ways to achieve active people, environments, societies and systems.

Thank you.

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