



72nd WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

May 2019

Provisional agenda item 12.5

Patient safety: Global action on patient safety

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN). Patient safety is of utmost importance to the over 20 million nurses worldwide.

As nursing care spans all areas of care delivery, nurses are well-placed to prevent harm to patients in several key areas where unsafe care occurs. This includes preventing medication errors and healthcare-associated infections and providing safe care in mental health settings.

For health systems to fully benefit from nursing practice, ICN urges governments to invest in safe nurse staffing as it has proven to be cost-effective to preventing these incidents. Safe, needs-based nurse staffing levels ensure that there is an appropriate number of nurses with a suitable mix of education, skills and experience available at all times. Furthermore, developing safe nurse staffing national legislation can ensure its delivery and maintenance.

ICN supports a just culture of safety that supports staff to openly and honestly report near misses and incidents without fear, allowing for future learning and improvements. As such, we encourage the development of patient safety learning systems as a priority intervention to addressing patient safety.

Working in both policy and practice, nurses can help bridge the “design gap” by bringing evidence-based solutions to policy decisions and must be central to the development of policies and strategies at all levels.

We wish to emphasise the importance of interprofessional teamwork to advance quality and safety by fostering a safe work environment built on mutual respect and shared decision-making. Achieving this will require policies that promote functional multidisciplinary teams, investment in interprofessional learning and governance and funding models that support team-based care.

ICN is passionate about people-centred care and empowering patients to be active participants in their own care. ICN supports putting a greater emphasis on engaging patients and families as key enablers of quality and safety.

Thank you.