



SEVENTY-FOURTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Provisional agenda item 22.1

Social determinants of health

May 2021

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is extremely concerned by the persistent and pervasive inequities that exist in our societies and in health systems and strongly supports the adoption of the resolution. The COVID-19 pandemic has and will continue to exacerbate health, social and economic inequities and requires countries to make a substantive commitment to addressing social determinants of health.

Considering the profound devastations and transformations our world is experiencing, the world's leaders should adopt and carry forward a vision where social justice is upheld and health equity is realised. It is through addressing the social determinants of health that this will be achieved.

With the knowledge and skills to work at all levels, from bedside to ministries of health, and supported by leadership, evidence and resources, nurses are in a precious and powerful position to strategically address the social determinants.

Throughout history, nurses have been at forefront of caring and advocating for people who are disempowered and marginalized. Nurses are the health professional closest to people and deliver comprehensive and person-centered care which makes them uniquely able to ensure health and social needs are met across the diversity of settings in which they work.

As described in the recent report “Nurses for health equity: Guidelines for tackling the Social Determinants of Health” ICN is committed to identifying trends related to the social determinants to inform the current and future direction of nursing across practice settings. ICN will provide relevant nursing expertise in education, clinical care delivery, research and policy domains for the health and social care of individuals and communities.

ICN calls on all governments and institutions to make meaningful, effective, and enduring policy changes to address the social determinants of health to ensure that everyone has the same opportunity to be healthy no matter who they are, where they live, or what they do.