

The Nursing Workforce Needs Greater Investment



The International Council of Nurses (ICN) released its International Nurses Day (IND) toolkit on 12 May 2022, a report that provides multisectoral guidance to nursing stakeholders globally. In releasing this document, ICN's goal is to support the implementation of the *WHO Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery: 2021-2025 (SDNM)*. The document calls for greater investment in nursing education, jobs, leadership, and service delivery and provides recommendations for successfully delivering and monitoring these.

It also provides evidence that current investment levels are inadequate, especially in light of the extra burdens on health systems incurred by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- While health workers are less than 3% of the global population, 14% are COVID-19 cases, which shows a disproportionate exposure to the virus. In some countries, the proportion can be as high as 35%.
- In Japan, 20% of nurses reported experiencing discrimination or prejudice during the pandemic. In the U.S., 64% of nurses felt overwhelmed, and 67% reported difficulty sleeping.
- Offensive behaviours, including sexual harassment, to healthcare workers, especially nursing staff, is more likely than in other professions. In the U.S., client violence against healthcare workers was estimated as 16 times greater than any other service profession.
- During the 2014-2016 West African Ebola outbreak, the infection risk for health workers was 21 to 32 times higher than the general adult population.
- Almost all WHO Member States report COVID-19 pandemic health services disruptions. About 66% report that workforce-related factors most commonly cause service disruptions.
- The ICN estimates 13 million nurses may be needed to fill the global nurse shortage in the future due to existing shortages, the nursing workforce ageing, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

These points underscore the need for greater investment in the nursing workforce, according to the report. ICN Chief Executive Officer, Howard Catton, adds: 'Governments should be urgently prioritising investment in nursing and the health workforce on that basis, and proportionate to its importance for the future of societies everywhere.'

Source: [ICN](#)

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