

# On International Nurses Day, a new State of the World's Nursing Report charts a path toward Universal Health Coverage

*International Council of Nurses issues rallying cry to governments for urgent nursing support, following launch of the WHO State of the World's Nursing report.*

GENEVA, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, May 12, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the world's nurses celebrate International Nurses Day (IND), ICN issues a rallying cry to governments around the globe for urgent nursing support, following the launch of the [second World Health Organization \(WHO\) State of the World's Nursing \(SOWN\)](#) report.

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*Dr Pamela Cipriano,  
International Council of  
Nurses President*

The World Health Organization State of the World's Nursing report 2025 (SOWN) report is a vital assessment of the global nursing workforce in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and underscores the urgent need for bold investments in nursing to address shortages, strengthen health systems, and promote global resilience

and economic stability.

The WHO SOWN report reflects the International Council of Nurses' IND 2025 report, 'Caring for nurses strengthens economies', and related Survey of National Nurses' Association (NNA) Presidents, reinforcing the central role of nurses in achieving global health, including Universal Health Coverage (UHC), and calling for immediate action to address long-standing challenges. The SOWN data presents a mixed picture. It highlights progress in areas such as advanced practice and nursing leadership, but indicates gravely concerning continued workforce shortages, inadequate compensation and working conditions, poor mental health support, inequities in the distribution and employment of nurses, and failures to fully enable nurses as practitioners and health care leaders.

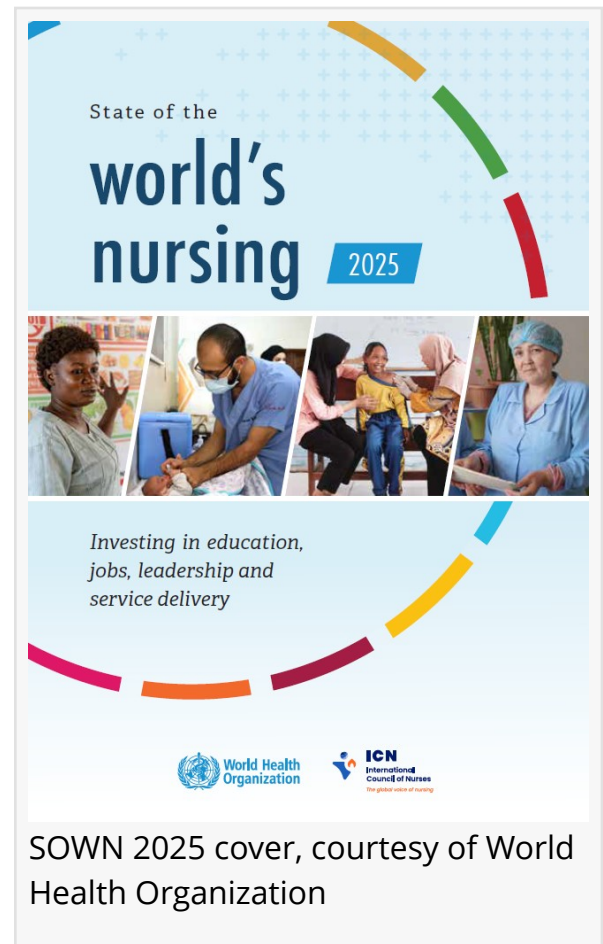
ICN President Dr Pamela Cipriano emphasized the significance of the report, stating:

“We welcome the SOWN 2025 report as an important milestone for monitoring progress and

gathering the evidence needed to strengthen and support the nursing workforce to achieve global health goals. The report clearly exposes the inequalities that are holding back the nursing profession and acting as a barrier to realizing UHC. Delivering on health for all is dependent on truly recognizing the value of nurses and harnessing their power and influence to act as catalysts of positive change in our health systems.”

ICN CEO Howard Catton, who is a Co-Chair of the SOWN report, said:

"In the five years since the first SOWN report, nurses have played a vital role in responding to multiple global crises and health challenges yet support for the nursing workforce has been inconsistent and slow. As I highlight [in my full briefing](#) on the SOWN findings, the global nursing shortage remains largely unchanged, protections against violence are insufficient, and we are seeing poor compensation, inadequate measures to ensure safe staffing and mental health support, and striking inequalities in workforce distribution which have driven a surge in international recruitment and inequitable migration patterns.



SOWN 2025 cover, courtesy of World Health Organization

‘We are used to nurses safeguarding society from catastrophic health outcomes when disaster strikes, just as airbags deploy to protect us in a collision. But without immediate action to invest in and care for our nursing workforce, we risk a perilous future where the nursing airbag will not inflate to offer vital protection to individuals’ and populations’ health.

‘The new SOWN report offers us a compass direction, a true north to guide us to build the strong, sustainable, supported nursing workforce we need to support the world’s health and achieve Universal Health Coverage. We now need the world’s leaders to follow this compass, which depends on facing up to the challenges and taking immediate action. ICN calls on governments worldwide to demonstrate the same courage and commitment that nurses show every day in serving their communities across the globe — by investing in nursing.”

ICN’s NNA Survey complements the SOWN findings. Almost two thirds of NNAs reported increasing demands on nurses since 2021, with 40% rating their country's capacity to meet health care needs as poor, pointing to widening gaps between supply and demand. Nursing salaries have stagnated, a shocking 86% of NNAs reported violence from patients or the public, and ICN’s IND report further highlights an alarming pattern of increased direct attacks on nurses and healthcare workers in conflict settings.

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world every 12 May, the anniversary of

Florence Nightingale's birth.

ICN's advocacy will continue at the upcoming World Health Assembly, 27 May -1 June, where it will call on WHO member states to extend the Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery (2021-2025).

On 9 - 13 June, global nursing leaders and researchers will gather with more than 6,000 delegates at the ICN Congress in Helsinki to discuss their findings and collaborate on solutions to empower nurses and drive sustainable improvements in care.

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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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