

International Council of Nurses Congress 2025 opens in Helsinki, Finland, with a joyful parade of global nurses

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HELSINKI, FINLAND, June 11, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- ICN's Congress 2025 has opened with an

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exuberant and joyful parade of nurses, many in traditional national dress, adding to Helsinki's claim to being one of the happiest cities in the world.

The Biennial Congress is bringing together 7,000 nurses, researchers, nurse academics and other experts from all over the world in a gathering that celebrates the nursing profession and the work of individual nurses.

It includes a huge scientific programme with opportunities for delegates to learn about the latest trends and

innovations, network with expert colleagues working in the same field, and meet others from different backgrounds and disciplines.

In the opening ceremony, outgoing ICN President Dr Pamela Cipriano and Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton held a moment of remembrance for the many nurses whose lives have been lost or dramatically altered as a result of disasters, the climate crisis and conflicts, as well as those who continue to care for others with courage and dedication in difficult times.

In her speech, Dr Cipriano spoke of ICN's long history supporting nurses and nursing. Referencing her presidential watchword 'influence,' she said that nurses need power to exercise their influence to pursue the changes needed for better health care, and ensure social and economic justice.

Dr Cipriano said: “Now, more than 125 years after our founding, it is timely to affirm that Nurses have the power to change the world. All of us have expert power through the knowledge we hold: we can leverage our knowledge as one of the most important tools to create influence for change.

'This is a time for action, a time when we advocate for a world where health care is stronger, fairer and more compassionate. When we stand together, there is nothing we cannot achieve. When nurses rise, societies thrive.

'I have been so privileged to serve you, and so honoured to have had this opportunity to help shape the future of nursing. We will continue to demonstrate our extreme worth to the people of the world, so that we fulfil the goal of moving from being invisible to invaluable."

Meanwhile the first plenary session on the first full day of ICN Congress was on the transformative power of leadership in driving lasting change within the health care sector. The distinguished speakers talked about how leaders can inspire and lead with purpose to create sustainable improvements in health care systems globally.

The session, which was chaired by Dr Cipriano, who started by saying that leadership happens "when you speak truth to power."

The Right Honourable Helen Clark, formerly the Prime Minister of New Zealand and Co-Chair of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response said: "I stand here to salute and support the leadership of nursing, and the critical roles which this profession plays through its care, its compassion, its professionalism.

'ICN has spoken out on the importance of enforcing international humanitarian law, and your Nurses for Peace campaign rallies support the Nurses serving on the front lines. Your voice and leadership on these issues is so vital.

'Each one of us stands on the shoulders of those who went before us to build a better world, and it's up to each of us now to pick up that baton and carry it forward, to build a more inclusive, healthier, more peaceful, more sustainable future for people and our planet. And we do count on nursing's continuing leadership and voice in this endeavour."

Dr Beverly Malone, President and CEO of the National League for Nursing spoke about leadership having many aspects, and the importance of nurses having at least one mentor to help them achieve their leadership aspirations.

"I like being a leader but sometimes there's a Target on my back. You need mentors, a support system and to believe in yourself, that you can actually do this, that it's worth doing, that there is a North Star for you to follow."

Included in the session were two video message, one from President of the European Commission Dr Ursula von der Leyen, and one from Odette Best, Pro Vice Chancellor, First Nations Strategy, University of Southern Queensland, Australia.

Dr von der Leyen said the EU is supporting countries to support nurses. "We need to invest in nurses' well-being, because when nurses thrive, the world does too."

And Odette Best spoke about the necessity for nurse leaders to recognise the needs of Indigenous people and the importance of them being cared for by people who understand or come from their culture. "As the profession, we have much to achieve if we are ever to close the gap in life differentials between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, within Australia, but also globally. So, this is a call to action, and a call to action is required from the minority nurses to the majority nurses. We need your support in our activism of creating lasting change, combating racism, having the hard conversations about colonialism, colonisation, and its devastating impacts on because of Indigenous people globally."

At the Congress, ICN launched its new Leadership Centre, an ambitious initiative to unite and scale up ICN's core leadership programmes, the Organizational Development of National Nursing Associations (ODENNA), Leadership for Change (LFC), Global Nursing Leadership Institute (GNLI) and the new Bank of Nursing Experts (BNE).

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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