

ICN charts a bold vision and calls for urgent investment in nursing to secure the future of care

Against a backdrop of escalating global health challenges, ICN issues a powerful call for urgent action to address the nursing workforce crisis

HELSINKI, FINLAND, June 12, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Against a backdrop of escalating global

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*ICN President, Dr Pamela
Cipriano*

health challenges, the ruling council of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) has issued a powerful call for urgent action to address the nursing workforce crisis. Backed by compelling evidence from several new reports, their Helsinki Communique outlines core challenges along with strategic solutions and reiterates that support for nursing is not a cost: it is a wise investment in the future of health care.

ICN's governing body, the Council of National Nursing Association Representatives (CNR) held its biennial meeting in Helsinki, Finland, 6–8 June, just ahead of the ICN Congress. This historic gathering marks a significant

milestone as ICN has now grown to encompass 140 different National Nursing Associations (NNAs), strengthening the collective voice of the world's nurses.

The CNR, composed of member association leaders, came together to tackle core issues affecting the workforce, including grave shortages, inadequate working conditions and compensation, rising attacks on health workers and facilities in conflict areas and other risks to nurses' safety and wellbeing, and inequitable workforce distribution which is exacerbated by unethical recruitment of nurses from the world's most fragile regions. In the Helsinki Communique that resulted from the meeting, the Council affirmed the central role of nurses, the world's largest health care profession, in leading health care transformations, tackling complex challenges from climate change to conflicts, and achieving global health goals, including Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

The Communique presents compelling evidence from multiple sources, including the 2025 State of the World's Nursing (SOWN) report and ICN's survey of NNA Presidents, highlighting the

critical need to invest in nursing to improve health outcomes, strengthen economies, and build more resilient societies. The Helsinki Communique sets out the steps needed to “reimagine how health care systems value, nurture and retain their nurses and ensure that nurses’ physical and mental health is protected”, including:

- Fair wages and decent working conditions
- A strengthened WHO Global Code of Practice for International Recruitment
- Support for pathways towards leadership and advanced practice
- Improved nursing education and professional development
- Strengthened regulation reflecting ICN Definition of Nursing

The CNR representatives also approved a resolution strongly condemning all attacks on health care personnel, patients and facilities and calling for full compliance with international humanitarian law that protects health workers in conflict.

ICN President Dr Pamela Cipriano, who chaired the meeting, remarked:

“Our discussions at this CNR have once more shown the strength and unity of the world’s nurses, who are committed to building a sustainable future for nursing and for health care. However, our association leaders are telling us that despite the extraordinary achievements of nurses in their regions and throughout the world, the nursing workforce continues to be overworked, undervalued, and under protected. We are seeing continued failures to care for nurses and to harness their power and influence as leaders and advanced practitioners.

‘We cannot deliver high-quality care for all without sufficient nurses — which is why we are calling on governments and health system leaders to make the smart, strategic choice and invest in a strong, sustainable nursing workforce.

‘We know that nurses are uniquely positioned to address the health challenges of the future, whether by delivering primary and preventive care in communities or by responding to climate emergencies, pandemics, and disasters. That is why it is so important to enable nurses as the health care leaders the world so desperately needs for thriving and healthy communities, populations, and economies. We urge all governments and decision-makers commit to the policy actions outlined in the Communique and ICN’s Charter for Change.”

In parallel to the CNR meeting, ICN hosted its Student Assembly which brought together over 250 student and early career nurses from around 70 countries under the banner “The Power of Student Nurses to Change the Landscape of Nursing”. The Assembly highlighted issues affecting new and student nurses, including mental health, financial stressors, and transition to practice, and discussed critical global health topics from nurse migration and nursing in conflict zones to women’s and LGBTQIA+ health equity. The event focused on empowering new nurses as future leaders ready to meet the most pressing health issues of tomorrow by transforming the delivery of care, leading health systems and organizations, and shaping policy.

ICN’s CEO Howard Catton addressed the Assembly, emphasizing the importance of ICN’s new Student and Early Career Nurses (SECN) Alliance. He said:

"The Alliance is a platform that brings the insights and influence of students and early career nurses to global health policy at all levels. It makes the voices and views of the next generation of nurses heard loud and clear and empowers them to co-create the future of health care.

'For ICN and its member associations to continue to flourish, we must nurture the next generation of nurse leaders. As ICN celebrates reaching 140 NNA members worldwide, we support today's students and early career nurses as the bold changemakers who will lead these associations and represent their regions in the decades to come."

The critical issues discussed at both the CNR and Student Assembly will be explored in depth throughout ICN's Congress, 9-13 June, with the theme "Nursing Power to Change the World".

On 9-13 June, global nursing leaders and researchers are joining with 7,000 delegates at the ICN Congress in Helsinki to discuss their findings and collaborate on solutions to empower nurses and drive sustainable improvements in care.

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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