

ICNM

International Centre on Nurse Migration
AN INFORMATION RESOURCE FOR POLICY MAKERS, PLANNERS, AND PRACTITIONERS

3600 Market Street, Suite 400
Philadelphia, PA 19104 USA

www.intlnursemigration.org



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION NURSING & MIDWIFERY FACTSHEET

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NURSING & MIDWIFERY

The World Health Organization's (WHO) global response to nursing and midwifery

The WHO's work, directed by the World Health Assembly, calls for WHO Member States and the WHO to strengthen the health professions of nursing and midwifery through engaging their expertise in the development of human resources for health policies. The objectives were released in the ***Global strategic directions for strengthening nursing and midwifery 2016-2020***, which provides a framework for key stakeholders and the WHO to develop, evaluate and implement measures to ensure the quality, accessibility, acceptability and safety of nursing and midwifery interventions.

The four broad themes highlighted in the guide are:

1. Ensuring an educated, competent and motivated workforce within effective and responsive health systems at all levels and settings
2. Optimizing policy development, effective leadership, management and governance
3. Maximizing the capacities and potential of nurses and midwives through professional collaborative partnerships, education and continuing professional development
4. Mobilizing political will to invest in building effective evidence-based nursing and midwifery workforce development

With the continuous evolution of nursing roles, nurses play a critical part in providing and managing personal care and treatment. Nurses work with families and communities, playing a central role in public health and the fight against disease and infection. Often, nurses are the first and, at times, *the only* health care professional that patients may encounter, raising the need for greater quality in assessment, care and treatment. Furthermore, nurses have the ability to shape and deliver effective interventions to meet the needs of their communities given their involvement in the local culture, understanding its strengths and weaknesses to provide the best level of care to all.

NURSING & MIDWIFERY

Nursing Facts:

- Nurses and midwives account for nearly 50% of the professional health workforce.
- There is a global shortage of health workers, in particular nurses and midwives, who represent more than 50% of the current shortage in health workers.
- The largest needs-based shortages of nurses and midwives are in South East Asia and Africa.
- For all countries to reach Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health and well-being, WHO estimates that the world will need an additional 9 million nurses and midwives by the year 2030.
- Nurses play a critical role in health promotion, disease prevention and delivering primary and community care. They provide care in emergency settings and will be key to the achievement of universal health coverage.
- Investing in nurses and midwives is good value for money. The report of the UN High Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth concluded that investments in education and job creation in the health and social sectors result in a triple return of improved health outcomes, global health security, and inclusive economic growth.
- Globally, 70% of the health and social workforce are women compared to 41% in all employment sectors. Nursing and midwifery occupations represent a significant share of the female workforce.