



International Council of Nurses (ICN)

Statement at the 68th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

Provisional agenda item: 5(0) Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in the WHO European Region (resolution EUR/RC66/R11)

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The health workforce has an enormous contribution to make in the promotion, prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and needs to be a central part of any NCD strategy. There are more than 40 million health professionals who can bring their skills, abilities and commitment to the task and help close the gap between the great ambitions of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe NCD strategies and action in the field.

Nurses are increasingly taking on the management of NCDs and providing high-quality, accessible and cost-effective services. Nurses play an even greater role by using every contact and every opportunity to foster health, disease prevention and early detection. Nurses are skilled professionals who can work with local communities on improving health and improve the effectiveness of community health workers by providing support and a point of reference.

Investing in and mobilising the nursing workforce will lead to real and lasting changes. We therefore call on European Regional Member States to:

- Invest in quality undergraduate, post graduate and continuing education for nurses to facilitate improved interventions.
- Enable nurses to work to their full scope of practice and support the development of advanced and specialist roles. This may require modernising regulatory frameworks to support nurses' broader decision-making authority.
- Include and strengthen the contribution of nursing leaders in high-level policy and planning decision making. This includes appointing nurses to senior positions within European health systems.
- Ensure that the necessary and appropriate diagnostic and treatment tools are available.

We urge Members to ensure that the health workforce is included as a central component of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe for the prevention and control of NCDs.