



144th WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD

January 2019

Provisional agenda item 5.5

Universal health coverage: Primary health care towards universal health coverage

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN). The nursing profession has for a long time supported achieving the right to the highest attainable standard of health through universal health coverage (UHC) based on primary health care (PHC).

Now more than ever, the nursing workforce is equipped to ensure successful implementation of PHC approaches. Nurses are the principal group of healthcare workers providing PHC across different settings. The nursing role is one of care provider, educator, coordinator and advocate. The scope within these roles continues to evolve as the health needs of individuals and communities change. As such, ICN urges governments to remove barriers to expanded nursing roles to allow nurses to work at full scope of practice.

ICN strongly believes that political will is vital to delivering the ambitions of the Astana Declaration. We call on ministries of health, within their national context, to integrate PHC as the foundation of their health systems. It is vital that resources are allocated to the PHC workforce with a focus on quality education, recruitment and retention strategies and assurance of decent work and fair pay.

ICN notes that in the Declaration the vision related to PHC and health services lacks the wording "people-centered". We suggest amending this in line with the integrated people-centered health services (IPCHS) 2016 resolution and to bring equity and quality together at the frontline.

Nurses are a fundamental part of the healthcare team and we wholeheartedly support the multidisciplinary approach as an important mechanism to support PHC. Implementation of the Declaration will depend on policies that promote functional multidisciplinary teams, investment in interprofessional learning and governance and funding models that support team-based care.

ICN is committed to working with its stakeholders and WHO to transform the PHC vision into action.

Thank you