



## **144<sup>th</sup> WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD**

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### **Provisional agenda item 6.6**

#### **Patient safety: Global action on patient safety**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN). Patient safety is of utmost importance to the over 20 million nurses worldwide who have an ethical duty to do no harm and promote the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

Nurses play a key role in improving the quality and safety of healthcare. As frontline healthcare professionals, nurses are educated to prevent patient safety incidents such as medication errors, care and treatment errors, trips and falls, and healthcare-associated infections.

Critical to preventing these incidents is safe nurse staffing. Safe, effective and needs-based nurse staffing levels ensure that there is an appropriate number of nurses with a suitable mix of education, skills and experience available at all times. For health systems to fully benefit from nursing practice, ICN urges governments to invest in safe staffing as it has proven to be cost-effective and lead to positive patient outcomes. Furthermore, developing safe nurse staffing national legislation can ensure its delivery and maintenance. ICN also strongly discourages the substitution of Registered Nurses with other cadres of workers as evidence shows this worsens patient outcomes.

In every healthcare setting, valid and reliable planning tools, evidence-based nurse staffing and robust review processes are needed to provide care safely. Furthermore, ICN supports a just culture of safety that supports staff to openly and honestly report near misses and incidents without fear, allowing for future learning and improvements.

ICN is passionate about people-centred care and empowering patients to be active participants in their own care. ICN supports putting a greater emphasis on engaging patients and families as key enablers of quality and safety and encourages governments to involve them in the development of all relevant policies and strategies.

Thank you.