

## **75<sup>th</sup> Session of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas**

### **4.6 Strategy for Improving Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in the Region of the Americas (Resolution CE172.R5)**

**25 – 29 September 2023, Washington, D.C., USA**

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) supports the need to focus on mental health, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19. ICN wants to highlight the mental health impact on the pandemic on nurses, as a key population of frontline workers with their mental health significantly impacted by the pandemic. As mentioned in this policy, mental health is linked with premature mortality and other economic costs. When the entire nursing workforce is currently at higher risk for poor mental health, economic impacts on the healthcare system are inevitable.

Furthermore, nurses play a critical role in all mental health interventions and nurses have a strong focus on community health, and whole person care. ICN, therefore, strongly supports the integration of mental health services into all aspects of healthcare systems to ensure we are caring for the whole person whenever they have contact with a health worker or the healthcare system. Within the ICN 2023 report *The Global Mental Health Nursing Workforce: Time to Prioritize and Invest in Mental Health and Wellbeing*, it is laid out that there is a vast shortage of specifically mental health specialty nurses needed to perform mental health interventions due to encompass inadequate planning, funding, awareness, incentives, and workforce well-being, contributing to the overall underdevelopment of mental health services. A strong investment in educating mental health nurses is needed to prioritize population mental health needs.

ICN also strongly supports the equity focus of this statement. The ICN 2021 Code of Ethics lays out that *“nursing care is respectful of and unrestricted by considerations of age, color, culture, ethnicity, disability or illness, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, politics, language, race, religious or spiritual beliefs, legal, economic or social status.”* ICN supports this statement calling for the decreasing stigmatization of mental health and the incorporation of culturally appropriate care.