

Statement on the Rights of Nurses to Health and Safety

Whereas nurses and all health care workers are essential to the health and well-being of all communities, and to the prevention of and scale-up of treatment for current global health crises including HIV, TB, and malaria pandemics, and to securing for all people the right to the highest attainable standard of health;

Whereas there is a global crisis related to shortages of nurses and health care workers directly impacting on achievement of Millennium Development Goals for health, raising the importance of retention of current workers and recruitment of new workers into the health workforce;

Whereas nurses and other health care workers face occupational health and safety risks in caring for persons with infectious illnesses including bloodborne and respiratory infections, including HIV and TB;

Whereas HIV-related illness is a leading cause of death, illness and absence from work for nurses and health care workers in regions heavily affected by the HIV epidemic, and the loss of this workforce directly impacts the ability to ensure health services to populations in need of prevention, care and treatment;

Whereas nurses and health care workers routinely face a lack of access to confidential, accessible, and affordable healthcare services, specifically in accessing HIV prevention, testing and care services;

We call upon all government leaders, bilateral and multilateral development donors and partners to adopt the following principles and incorporate them in implementation of all current and future programs supporting the delivery of HIV prevention, care and treatment services;

- Provision of standard infectious disease precautions for the protection of the health, safety, and well-being of ALL nurses and other health care workers in their work environments, with concrete policies, regulations and management directives that deliver these protections for these essential and valuable health personnel, including rapid access to post-exposure prophylaxis in the event of potential exposures to HIV and adequate supplies of protective equipment;
- Provision of measures ensuring safe workplace conditions, respecting the physical safety of nurses and health care workers in the course of traveling to or carrying out their duties;
- Provision of accessible, confidential, and affordable access to healthcare services, including HIV testing, prevention and care, for nurses and other health care workers;
- Provision of a supportive environment for nurses and health care workers engaged in health service delivery, recognizing the high rates of burnout and fatigue among health professionals dealing with life-threatening illnesses on a daily basis, enhancing their ability to care for their patients as well as themselves.

Organizational Endorsements:

US Based

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
AIDS Institute
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
American Nurses Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses
Dermatology Nurses' Association
National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners

National Association of Neonatal Nurses
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Gerontological Nursing Association
National League for Nursing
Nurses Christian Fellowship
Oncology Nursing Society
Partners in Health
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

International

Asociacion Nacional de Enfermeras de Colombia
Canadian Association for International Nursing
Cordaid
Ethiopian Nurses Association
Federacion Argentina de Enfermeria
Fédération Nationale des Infirmières de Belgique
Global Health Awareness Research Foundation
Global Health Workforce Alliance
International Association of Forensic Nurses
International Council of Nurses
International Health Care Worker Safety Center,
University of Virginia

International Society of Nurses in Genetics, Inc
Mahlungulu Foundation for Individual and Community Development, South Africa
Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses
National Nursing Association of Kenya
Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada
Public Services International
Singapore Nurses Association
Slovak Trade Union of Health and Social Services
Uganda National Association for Nurses and Midwives
Vårdförbundet
Zambia Union of Nurses Organization