

156th WHO Executive Board Meeting 3 – 11 February 2025, Geneva

Item 8 Mental health and social connection

The International Council of Nurses (ICN), representing over 28 million nurses, strongly supports prioritizing mental health and social connection as essential in all countries and communities. Nurses face significant physical, mental, and social challenges, exacerbated by rising violence and attacks against healthcare workers and inadequate support. Mental disorders and social isolation create a heavy economic burden, impacting workforce sustainability, patient safety, and care quality. ICN urges Member States to invest in nurses' mental health and well-being.

ICN highlights its *Guidelines on Mental Health Nursing (2024)*, which provide essential guidance to enhance care, particularly for vulnerable populations, and recommends their integration into national policies. Addressing this crisis requires urgent action on workforce shortages. As the largest part of the mental health workforce, nurses are key to transforming care and strengthening health systems.