

62nd Directing Council

77th Session of the Regional Committee to the WHO for the Americas

Washington DC, 29 September–3 October 2025

Agenda item 7.5 – Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases: Final Report

The International Council The International Council of Nurses (ICN) acknowledges the Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases and emphasizes that a strong, well-supported health and nursing workforce is essential to delivering an effective and sustainable NCD response.

Yet building effective and resilient health systems requires more than acknowledging this—it demands meaningful investment in education, regulatory reform, and service delivery models that empower nurses and other health professionals to work at their full scope.

We envision a health system focused on promoting positive wellbeing, not just avoiding disease. Achieving this requires a shift towards health equity, community empowerment, and care by multidisciplinary teams. Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs), when fully supported and autonomous, can lead in providing services such as screening, diagnosis, health education, chronic disease management, and mental health care, especially in underserved and rural areas.

The ICN's 2024 Primary care report shows that APNs improve continuity of care, community prevention, and health system responsiveness. Our 2024 Mental Health Nursing Guidelines highlight the need to integrate mental health into primary care for chronic illnesses. Nurse-led, community-based teams provide culturally responsive, accessible care tailored to local needs. However, insufficient focus and investment in these models threaten the strategy's long-term success.

And yet, despite the 2025 World Health Assembly resolution that recognized the urgent need to accelerate progress on nursing—extending the Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery to 2030 and underscoring the necessity of

coordinated workforce investment—the WHO’s Saving Lives, Spending Less global investment case for NCDs fails to acknowledge nurses, even though no NCD strategy can succeed without them.

In conclusion, advancing the NCD agenda requires recognizing health professionals, especially nurses, as leaders in multisectoral collaboration. Strengthening regulations, investing in education, and supporting nurse-led care are key to building equitable, people-centred, and resilient health systems.