

72 nd Session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, 15–17 October 2025

Item 4(k) Addressing noncommunicable diseases in emergencies: a regional framework for action

The International Council of Nurses (ICN), representing over 30 million nurses worldwide, acknowledges the progress report on addressing noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in emergencies and strongly supports the implementation of the regional framework for action.

ICN emphasizes that a strong, well-supported nursing and health workforce is essential for an effective and sustainable NCD response in emergencies. Around the world, nurses are on the frontlines of NCD prevention and control—screening and managing chronic conditions, educating and empowering communities, and ensuring continuity of care in crisis settings. As the first point of contact for many patients, nurses are pivotal in promoting healthy lifestyles and managing conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer, and mental health disorders.

ICN calls on Member States to:

1. Invest in nursing for NCD prevention and control: ICN calls for greater investment in educating and providing professional development for nurses to deliver integrated NCD services at the primary health care level. Evidence shows that nurse-led primary care improves quality of life, reduces complications, and enhances cost-effectiveness. Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs), when fully supported, can lead in screening, diagnosis, chronic disease management, health education, and mental health care—especially in underserved and rural communities. ICN’s report *Nursing and Primary Health Care: Towards the Realization of Universal Health Coverage* demonstrates the vital role of nurses in improving prevention, continuity of care, and system responsiveness.
2. Leverage digital health: ICN highlights the need to expand digital health tools, including telemedicine, electronic health records, and mobile health technologies, to strengthen continuity of care and improve access to NCD services during emergencies. Nurse leaders play a crucial role in positively shaping the advancement of digital health and should be supported and resourced to lead the

digital transformation for the nursing workforce. Nurses must participate in monitoring and evaluating new and emerging digital health technologies to ensure they are positively contributing to health system and health workforce processes and health needs at all levels.

As the largest health workforce globally, nurses must be fully engaged in leadership, strategic planning, and the design of patient-centred models for NCD prevention and management, particularly in emergencies. Their insights and innovations are indispensable to shaping effective responses. To conclude, investing in nursing is not only critical to tackling the NCD crisis—it is a decisive investment in resilient health systems, stronger economies, and healthier, more equitable communities worldwide.

Links

- Nursing and Primary Health Care Towards the realization of Universal Health Coverage - https://www.icn.ch/sites/default/files/2024-09/ICN_PHC-Report-2024_EN_FINAL.pdf