

76th Session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific, 20–24 October 2025

IMPLEMENTING THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS (2005) AMENDMENTS. Item 11

Honourable Chair, distinguished representatives, esteemed colleagues,

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) welcomes the adoption of the International Health Regulations (2005) amendments, alongside the WHO Pandemic Agreement, as critical milestones toward a coordinated, equity-driven global health security framework. We support the Western Pacific Region's commitment to the "Weaving Health" vision and commend WPRO's leadership in operationalizing these commitments through APHSAF.

Nurses are essential to health emergency response. Yet, they remain underrepresented in preparedness planning. ICN urges Member States to ensure that nurses, including Chief Nursing Officers, are resourced and empowered to shape national IHR implementation. The designation of National IHR Authorities must include clear representation from nursing leadership.

ICN's *Core Competencies in Disaster Nursing* provide a globally relevant foundation for surge workforce readiness. These competencies are essential for embedding nursing capacity into mechanisms such as Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs).

We stress that pandemic preparedness financing must extend beyond systems to reach the workforce directly. Investments must support nursing education, retention, and safety—especially in low- and middle-income countries, where shortages are most severe. ICN's *2024 IND Report* and the WHO State of the Worlds Nursing report *2025* confirm that this investment yields not only resilience but economic returns.

Protection of health workers must be guaranteed. The WHO HEPR framework for Strengthening health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience rightly identifies the need to protect health workers. ICN calls on Member States to ensure the development and integration of safety-focused legislation, policies, and standards aim to protect health workers. This includes providing health workers with the necessary resources to undertake their work safely and efficiently

In sum, implementation of the IHR amendments will only succeed if they embed and elevate the role of nurses. A future-ready health security system must place nurses at the decision-making table—not only on the front lines.

Thank you.

Links

- International Nurses Day 2024 is: “Our Nurses. Our Future. The economic power of care” - <https://www.icn.ch/resources/publications-and-reports/international-nurses-day-2024-report>
- Core Competencies in Disaster Nursing: Competencies for Nurses Involved in Emergency Medical Teams (LEVEL III)
https://www.icn.ch/sites/default/files/2023-04/ICN_2022_Disaster-Comp-Report_EN_WEB.pdf