



International Council of Nurses

**OUR NURSES.
OUR FUTURE.**

International Nurses Day 2026

Empowered Nurses Save Lives

IND Report Preview

Empowered
Nurses Save Lives



Nursing **power** to save & transform lives... and change the world!

@ICNurses



#IND2026 – Empowered Nurses Save Lives



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**Game
Changer**

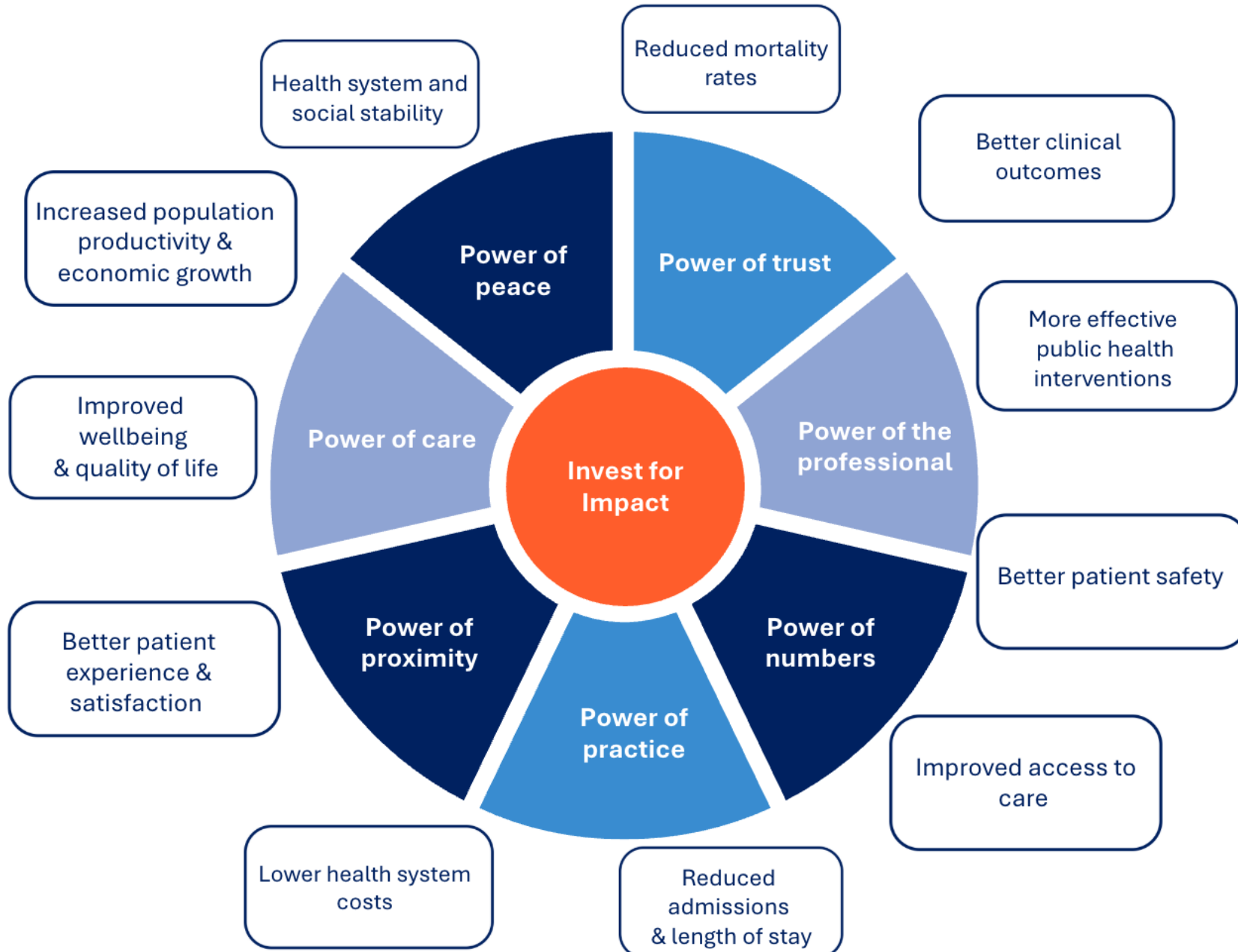
Banksy, 2020



The seven powers of empowered nurses

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The power of **trust**

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Trust translates nursing skill & presence into measurable health outcomes at scale.



Impact & Evidence

- OECD surveys of 100,000+ patients: **high trust** → **better health outcomes, better care experiences** *
- **Trust improves public health** — e.g. willingness to abide by health guidelines during pandemic
- **Trust drives vaccine uptake**: over past 50 years, immunization saved **154 million lives and 10.2 billion full health years** *
- **Trust collapses after harm**: After an adverse event, only 45% of patients trust the system, versus 70% among those who did not experience an adverse event. *

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The power of **trust**

@ICNurses



Overcoming challenges

Growing institutional trust gap: high trust in nurses, much lower trust in systems

Workload pressures, understaffing, time constraints, & adverse events erode trust



Actions

- Invest in safe staffing and time-rich care environments
- Embed nurses in health system design and decision-making
- Measure and manage trust as a clinical and governance metric

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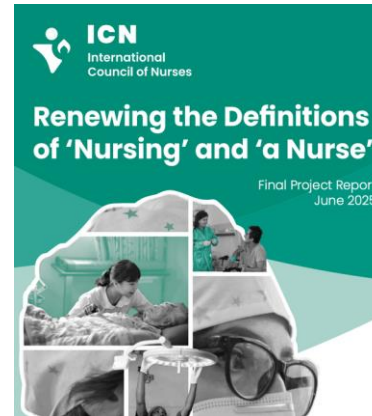
The power of **the professional**

@ICNurses

Nursing professionalism turns clinical expertise into life-saving outcomes

Three pillars:

- 1 Rigorous education
- 2 Binding ethical standards
- 3 Regulation & accountability



Impact

Every 10% increase in bachelor's-degree-prepared nurses **reduces patient deaths by 7% ***

Higher proportion of professional RNs in skill mix → **fewer deaths, fewer falls & adverse events, better outcomes * * ***

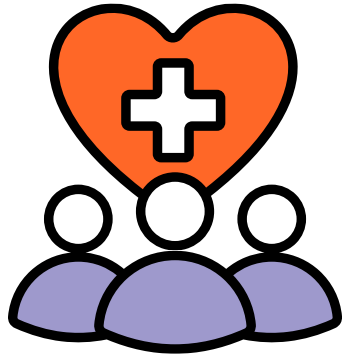
Using **professional, registered nurses over unregulated workers** saves lives, prevents adverse events, and avoids costs

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The power of **the professional**



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Overcoming challenges

Substituting professional nurses with unregulated workers: a false economy that risks patient safety

Working conditions preventing nurses from practicing to their professional standards

Insufficient investment in education and faculty



Actions

- Invest in professional nurses: use less-skilled workers only as a complement
- Protect the professional title "nurse" (adopt [ICN Definitions](#))
- Working conditions and education that support nurses' professional standards

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The power of **the numbers**

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30 million nurses: the world's largest health workforce with a massive global impact.

Global shortage of **5.8 million**



Impact

Closing health workforce gaps could **save 189 million years of life** lost to early death and disability and **add \$1.1 trillion** to the global economy *

As the largest segment of workforce, much of this gain comes from nurses.

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The power of **the numbers**



Overcoming challenges

Triple crisis:

Pipeline (education/faculty constraints, challenges employing graduates)

Retention (burnout, unsafe conditions, poor pay driving nurses away)

Utilization (nurses over-skilled for daily roles) ^{*}₋

Inequitable international recruitment:

257,000 nurses in OECD countries from WHO "red list" nations ^{*}₋



Actions

- **Retain first:** safe staffing, fair pay, violence prevention, wellbeing supports
- **Scale education:** address faculty shortages, expand placements, fund access
- **Build absorption** so graduates become nurses in care
- **Make international recruitment** ethical and end dependency on fragile source countries



The power of **practice**

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Nurses working to their full scope of education and competence (including Advanced Practice) is one of the fastest, most cost-effective ways to strengthen health systems

79% of nurses report being **over-skilled** for their daily roles — a massive waste of human capital ^{*}



Impact

Up to **77% of preventive care** and **47% of chronic care** could be provided by nurses and other non-physician roles ^{*}

Cochrane reviews: Nurse-led care delivers outcomes equivalent or superior to physician-only models & potentially improved patient satisfaction ^{*}

Optimized scope of practice improves access, equity, efficiency, and nurse retention

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The power of **practice**

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Overcoming challenges

Nurses held back by

- Outdated legislation
- Physician-centred models and hierarchies
- Lack of investment in nurse-led care



Actions

- **Modernize legislation** to remove outdated barriers to full scope
- **Invest in Advanced Practice Nursing** roles and nurse-led care models
- **Build clinical career pathways**
- **Align funding with modern care models** — reimburse nurse-led clinics, PHC

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The power of **care**

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Nurses are the backbone of person-centred, integrated, primary health care — the care model the world urgently needs to address rising chronic disease, ageing populations, and persistent inequalities.



Impact

Scaling up primary health care could save 60 million lives by 2030 in low- and middle-income countries *

Investing in NCD prevention and management could save over 12 million lives globally and drive \$1 trillion in gains *

OECD survey of 107,000+ patients: person-centred care → higher wellbeing, better outcomes, higher trust *

Person-centred care approaches can reduce mortality, hospital admissions and improve quality of life **

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The power of **care**

@ICNurses

Overcoming challenges

Systems designed for episodic, fragmented care — while sustained, coordinated care required for NCDs (74% of all global deaths)

Almost 40% of patients do not report good care coordination; only ~25% have care plan *

Pressured environments and admin burden pull nurses away from high-value, person-centred care



Actions

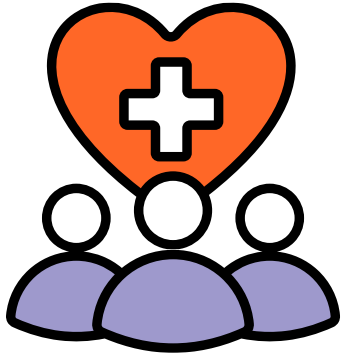
- **Redesign care models** to people-centred primary and community care
- **Invest in nurse-led care** coordination and integrate care systems
- **Reclaim time for care:** reform staffing, workflow, and nurse-led digital supports

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The power of proximity

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Nurses' closeness to patients means continuous observation, rapid response, sustained human connection, and extended reach of care.



Impact

Nursing proximity prevents care-related harm, which costs the world an estimated \$606 billion annually ^{*}₋

Higher nurse staffing reduces mortality by 5–20%; every additional hour/day of RN care → 3% reduction in risk of death ^{*}₋

Nurses' geographic reach brings essential care to underserved populations — advancing UHC

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The power of **proximity**

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Overcoming challenges

Nurses face "time poverty"; up to 30% of admin tasks could be automated/delegated *

Understaffing, work overload, and task fragmentation block the full power of closeness to patients



Actions

- **Adopt safe staffing** through acuity-based workforce planning
- **Redesign clinical workflows** to return time to care — delegate admin, reduce fragmentation, well-designed digital infrastructure
- **Expand nurse-led models** in community and primary health care to bring care closer to populations

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The power of **peace**

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In conflict, nurses are vital to emergency response — but they also support the **recovery, rebuilding and social stability** that brings peace.



Impact

Nurses prevent epidemics: 80% of infectious disease outbreaks occur in fragile or conflict-affected countries [*](#)

Nurses maintain access to essential care - often when all other services have collapsed

Nurses and nursing associations enable humanitarian response and support entire communities

Health and peace reinforce each other: nurses contribute to both

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The power of **peace**

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No nurse should ever be a target

Over 3,600 attacks on healthcare in 2024 — 10 per day *

Globally, 1 billion people are served by facilities with no or unreliable electricity, and 1.7 billion people by facilities lacking basic hygiene services *

Health system shocks devastate development: \$7–37 billion in societal economic costs; 15–20% drops in GDP *



Actions

- **Strengthen and enforce International Humanitarian Law** - end impunity for attacks on health care
- **Protect workforce wellbeing and rights** in conflict, including mental health support and working conditions
- **Build emergency capability** across the nursing workforce



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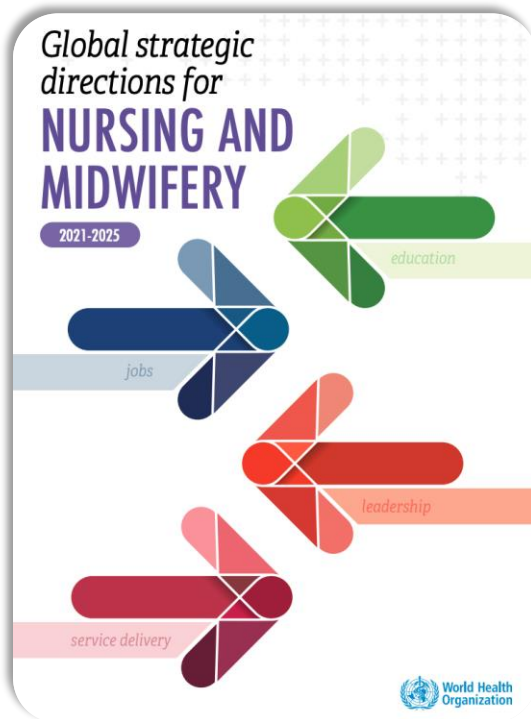
Invest for **impact**

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- Full impact of these powers held back by structural failures: underinvestment, outdated policy, exclusion of nurses from leadership.
- With turbulent health financing and geopolitical environments: investing in the health workforce must be a priority.

Turning policy into action — advocacy & National Workforce Plans

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ICN's Charter for Change

- 1** **Protect and invest in the nursing profession** to rebuild health systems that can deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and Universal Health Coverage to improve global health. Recognise and value health and health care as an investment not a cost. Secure commitments for investment to maintain equitable and people-centred care.
- 2** **Urgently address and improve support for nurses' health and well-being by ensuring safe and healthy working conditions and respecting their rights.** Put in place systems to ensure safe staffing levels. Ensure protections against violence and hazards in the workplace and implement and enforce international labour standards on the rights of nurses to work in safe and healthy supportive environments ensuring physical as well as mental health protections.
- 3** **Advance strategies to recruit and retain nurses to address workforce shortages. Improve compensation for nurses to ensure fair and decent pay and benefits, and uphold positive practice environments** that listen to nurses and provide them with the resources they need to do their jobs safely, effectively and efficiently. Fund professional governance, recognition and development activities across career trajectories.
- 4** **Develop, implement and finance national nursing workforce plans** with the objective of self-sufficiency in the supply of future nurses. Align resources to support a robust workforce to deliver essential health services, reverse unemployment and retain talent. When international migration takes place ensure it is ethical, transparent, monitored and delivers equal mutual benefits for sending and receiving countries as well as respecting the rights of individual nurses. Undertake system workforce planning and monitoring across the care continuum.
- 5** **Invest in high-quality, accredited nursing education programmes** to prepare more new nurses and advance career development for existing nurses. Design curricula so that nurses graduate with the right skills, competencies and confidence to respond to the changing and evolving health needs of communities and support career progression from generalist to specialist and advanced practice.
- 6** **Enable nurses to work to their full scope of nursing practice** by strengthening and modernizing regulation and investing in advanced nursing practice and nurse-led models of care. Reorientate and integrate health systems to public health, primary care health promotion and prevention, community, home-based and patient-centred care.
- 7** **Recognise and value nurses' skills, knowledge, attributes and expertise.** Respect and promote nurses' roles as health professionals, scientists, researchers, educators and leaders. Involve nurses in decision-making affecting health care at all levels. Promote and invest in an equitable culture that respects the nursing profession as leading contributors to high quality health systems.
- 8** **Actively and meaningfully engage national nursing associations** as critical professional partners in all aspects of health and social care policy, delivery and leadership as the experienced and trusted voice of nursing. Build local, national and global multilateral partnerships.
- 9** **Protect vulnerable populations, uphold and respect human rights, gender equity and social justice.** Place and uphold nursing ethics at the centre of health systems' design and delivery so all people can access health care that is equitable, non-discriminatory, people-centred and rights based, and without the risk of financial hardship.
- 10** **Appoint nurse leaders** to executive positions of all health care organisations and government policy making. Strengthen nursing leadership throughout health systems and create and sustain nursing leadership roles where they are most needed.





Actions for NNAs #IND2026

Use ICN's IND2026 key messages, quotes, and branding in your IND campaigns and celebrations!



Embargoed Word draft for translations mid-April; embargoed full report early May



Share the power of nursing in your region —
Send your stories to media@icn.ch by 30 April 2026 using template we'll provide

Join ICN's IND webinars at the time that suits best!
12 May 2026

1. TBD — Early am CEST — (designed for Western Pacific/SE Asia timezone)
2. 09.00am CEST — (Europe/Eastern Mediterranean/Africa/SE Asia)
3. 15.00 CEST — (Americas)





Your region, **your power**

Provide information on the most impactful power(s) in your region for IND2026 media and webinars.

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Which of the powers are strongest in your region?
The power of X

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The impact

What positive impact does this nursing power have in your region?

Share an example, story, photo, data that shows this power in action

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- ▼
- ▼
- ▼

Which of the powers are strongest in your region?
The power of X

@ICNurses

The challenges

What challenges are preventing nurses from using this power to its fullest in your region?

What are the barriers nurses are facing?
What needs to change?

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Send completed templates to media@icn.ch by 30 April 2026



IND2026 Campaign Kit

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Main IND page

International Nurses Day

IND is celebrated around the world every May 12, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. ICN commemorates this important day each year with the production and distribution of the International Nurses' Day (IND) resources and evidence.



IND 2026: Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives

Every day, nurses both save and improve lives, and their impact is greatest when they are properly empowered. At a moment of extraordinary global pressure, this year's IND theme focuses on making the structural changes needed to harness the power of the nursing workforce. Building on the last two IND reports – The Economic Power of Care and Caring for Nurses Strengthens Economies – this new theme highlights the vital role of the nursing workforce to improve health outcomes and deliver the trusted, person-centred primary care that can transform health systems and address our world's biggest health challenges. Our hashtags for 2026 are #IND2026 and #OurNursesOurFuture.

Download our resources

IND 2026 logo

English | French | Spanish

Turkish | Japanese

Social media banners

English | French | Spanish

Brand guidelines with downloadable assets/templates

In English with downloadable assets/templates in English | French | Spanish

** Please use all materials in their original form. If you require an alternative version or have any questions, please contact us [here](#).*

- On IND and thereafter we will post all information and assets here
- For prelaunch materials, we have created a dedicated webpage for you

#IND2026 – Empowered Nurses Save Lives



IND2026 Prelaunch Dedicated web page

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Prelaunch Dedicated Toolkit web page

International Nurses Day 2026 – Prelaunch Dedicated Toolkit

This is your dedicated Prelaunch Toolkit page, where you will find all the resources you need for International Nurses Day 2026 ahead of the official materials release.



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Download our templates and resources

IND 2026 "Powers" templates to share stories

["Powers" PowerPoint templates](#)

Brand guidelines with downloadable assets/templates

[In English with downloadable assets/templates in English | French | Spanish](#)

** Please use all materials in their original form. If you require an alternative version or have any questions, please contact us [here](#).*

Letter templates for advocacy & media outreach – COMING SOON!

- This page is dedicated for prelaunch materials available only for an exclusive audience
- Templates:
 - PPT template to share stories of powers
 - Letter templates for advocacy & media outreach
- Will be updated continuously to provide you with the necessary resources including today's recording



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Thank you!





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Thank you!

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