



## **ICN President Annette Kennedy receives honorary doctorate from Dublin City University in recognition of her leadership of the global nursing workforce**

**Geneva, Switzerland, 11 May 2021** – Dublin City University has conferred an honorary doctorate on ICN President Annette Kennedy for her role in leading the global nursing workforce.

She joins an illustrious roll call of people who have received the award of Doctor of Philosophy from the university, which includes former US President Bill Clinton, former President of Ireland Mary Robinson, and Nobel prize-winning poet and playwright Seamus Heaney.

The citation for the award praises Ms Kennedy's leadership throughout her nursing career, and her ability to bring people together and empower them.

It also cites her contribution to healthcare, including her membership of the influential World Health Organization Independent High-level Commission on Noncommunicable Diseases, and her membership of the Slaintecare Advisory Implementation Committee, which is charged with advising on the transformation of Ireland's healthcare system.

Accepting her honorary doctorate, Ms Kennedy said:

"I am delighted to accept this honorary doctorate on behalf of the world's nurses and midwives, who have shown extraordinary courage during this pandemic. It is a fitting tribute to the 27 million nurses I am honoured to represent, and I thank Dublin City University for leading the way in recognising nurses at this most difficult time.

'The pandemic has shown nurses' courage, their care, their compassion, their competence and their leadership skills. Nurses are central to the curbing of this pandemic, as they deliver 90% of the hands-on care. They have saved many lives, but sadly, thousands of them have sacrificed their lives in the pandemic.

'ICN research indicates that 80% of nurses are suffering mental health issues, burn-out, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and Covid-related violence. We estimate that 13 million nurses will be needed to fill the gap of the global nursing shortage in the next few years.

'It is imperative that governments act now to mitigate the risks of increased turn-over and improve nurse retention. Investment, improved pay and conditions, and retention strategies are essential if we are to save global health systems.

'If we have learned a lesson from this pandemic, it is that we need strong, resilient health systems that are prepared for the unknown and will maintain a healthy society. The simple fact is that healthy people contribute to healthy economies.

'The immense commitment and courage that nurses have demonstrated during 2020 and 2021, which is the Year of the Health and Care Worker, make me optimistic for the future. I urge nurses to seize the opportunity and make their voices heard, despite the serious challenges ahead.

'Together, as a society, we can surmount those challenges. We can work together to build a better future and a better world. I have seen the courage of our nurses and I am impressed: nursing is in safe hands.

'We cannot wait for the opportunities: we have to create the opportunities. In the words of Greta Thunberg, the climate activist: 'No one is too small to make a difference'.

'Together, each one of us, with our 27 million nursing colleagues, can change the world. The future is in our hands.'

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