

**ΠΑΓΚΥΠΡΙΟΣ ΣΥΝΔΕΣΜΟΣ ΝΟΣΗΛΕΥΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΑΙΩΝ**  
**CYPRUS NURSES AND MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION**

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8<sup>th</sup> CNF Conference

12- 13 March 2010

Coral Beach Hotel, Paphos, Cyprus

Welcome Speech by President of CYNMA

Dear Representative of Minister of Health,

Dear Colleague Presidents of the RCN and the MUMN

Dear Colleagues,

It is both, a great privilege and a great honor to be here with you today. A review of the programme will show that we will have the pleasure of meeting and hearing distinguished colleagues from many different fields of expertise from European Commonwealth Countries (UK, Cyprus and Malta) and from other countries like Greece, Jordan, USA, Portugal and Australia speaking with authority on a variety of subjects.

I note the presence of the Chief Executive Officer of the Royal College of Nursing Australia (Ms Debra Cerasa), the Assistant Federal Secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation (Ms Lee Thomas) and the International Confederation of Midwives Southern Region Board Member (Mr Vitor Varela).

Throughout the conference, we will have the opportunity to share our knowledge and experiences in an effort to develop and enhance the profession and to a certain extent, shape the health policies of our respective countries for the benefit of our clients.

Allow me at this stage to convey my sincere gratitude to my colleague presidents of the Maltese Union of Midwives and Nurses (Mr Paul Pace) and the Royal College of Nursing UK (Mrs Maura Buchanan) with whom we have established a long collaboration and work closely within the CNF and other International Nursing Organisations.

Sincere thanks to our Executive Secretary Mrs Jill Iliffe for her valuable contribution during our discussions and meetings.

I would also like to take this opportunity to convey thanks to the CYNMA board members and of course to the local committee of Paphos which greatly contributed much for the whole preparation of this conference.

Dear Colleagues,

With our rich and diverse history as a nation and with Cyprus' forward-looking stance on nursing issues, we are honoured to host this conference entitled: "Advancing Health through Nursing: Commonwealth's European Region Perspectives".

National health systems are facing many challenges. Major reforms in health systems focus on financial sustainability, quality assurance and the improvement of clinical effectiveness. Especially

now, in the 21st century; health is considered by WHO as a shared responsibility, involving equitable access to essential care and collective defence against transnational threats.

Furthermore, the overarching values of universality, access to high quality care, equity, and solidarity are widely accepted in the EU. The complexity in the dimensions emerging from the mechanisms of healthcare services, designate the necessity of having an interdisciplinary collaboration for confronting problems and face challenges.

Primary Health Care was considered as the “way” for achieving the target “Health for All” because, its practices are scientifically based, on socially acceptable methods and technology and can be easily accessible by individuals and families in the community. Primary Health Care constitutes the most economic and efficient solution for promoting health.

Within these parameters, on the basis of demographic studies and statistical data the socio-economic developments should be re-examined. For example, life expectancy that has increased consistently since the 1950s - designate the necessity for long-term care.

Many studies focus on the possibility of the individual to work more years. Inevitably, the workforce is ageing. The nature of healthcare demands and the global economic crisis are limiting the ability of services to empower the human workforce.

The workforce constitutes a basic factor in the production and distribution of health services and determines the quality of care. The performance indicators of personnel are related with patient mortality, with complications, with adverse outcomes and the length of stay in hospital. Since there is a shortage of nursing staff, the governmental policies should focus on strategies for recruiting more health professionals.

### ***Quality of Care and Health Services***

The need for formal and evidence based clinical procedure guidelines, protocols, clinical control, and quality assurance within the public hospitals has been stressed. These characteristics, in combination with the improvement of existing processes regarding the continuous in service education, and the establishment of a credit system for continuous professional development will contribute to achieving better outcome indicators.

The Ministry of Health should seriously take into consideration the needs and the expectations of citizens. Therefore, a common frame of indicators should be established in order to collect information concerning the quality of services especially through existing and future mechanisms of incidence reporting.

Improvement of quality is based on systematic documentation of structure; process and outcome indicators. Therefore, we suggest that opportunities for knowledge update on issues related with the socio-economic evaluation of technology and care should be offered equally to all health care professionals.

### ***Continuous Professional Development***

*The need for nurses to maintain and update their knowledge and skills is considered essential for achieving and maintaining quality in the provision of services, and is in keeping with a broader recognition that lifelong learning, embracing both formal and informal post-basic education, is an ongoing requirement for all nurses. Nurses also have an individual responsibility to be accountable and able to lead quality improvement organisations.*

*The demand for quality, accountability and efficacy of practice has highlighted the need for health professionals to demonstrate that they are keeping abreast of new knowledge, techniques and developments related to their profession (EFN, 2007).*

*“In-service education helps the bedside nursing care providers acquire, maintain, or increase their competence in specific areas of practice. It enhances their skills, knowledge, and attitude in relation to specific aspects of their role in the work setting and reflects “our way of doing things.” (American University of Beirut, 2007)*

Continuous Professional Development is an investment. The determination of needs, the application of in-service education and their evaluation can be implemented together with health care workers.

A comparative study among eleven EU countries revealed the level of in-service education structures and suggested that; in Cyprus we should investigate further the impact of short educational courses and seminars. It has also been suggested that knowledge dissemination, through revised learning policies can take place by the more effective utilisation of technology, and modern methods of management of learning.

CYNMA has achieved in making amendments in the legislation for the National Health Scheme concerning the above. We have offered the opportunity to Nurses and Midwives to learn together with all other Health Professionals in future educational programs to be offered by the Health Insurance Organisation.

### **National Health Scheme**

The initiatives that have been taken for the promotion and application of the new NHS will satisfy Cypriots, if the enhancement of social policies will focus on the interests of the individual citizen.

Generally, the proposed National Health Scheme aspires to eliminate inequalities, regarding the financing of health care. It will guarantee free access, social solidarity and justice, universality and will give the consumers the right to choose their doctor and Nursing Institution. What we say is that the equal distribution of resources and equal distribution of services should take into consideration the citizens' needs.

However, equality on access of health care services has raised a lot of questions. There will be “geographic restrictions”. For example, the access to emergency care will not be easily solved, particularly in remote areas and small communities.

The proposed Cyprus NHS will promote a healthy competition between the public and the private sector. The Health Insurance Organisation must take into consideration the European and International experience and re-examine the existing socio-economic conditions, like for example, the life expectancy and long term care, the low birthrate and the potential reduction of active workforce and the economic crisis.

Consequently, in the light of the global landscape, there should be continuous evaluation and reform measures with parallel improvement of provided health services. During the competition that will prevail in conditions of a free market it is advisable that competent managers shall be engaged to assist in the work to be done for improvement of services.

### **Nurses Contribution**

*Nurses have key and increasingly important roles to play in society's effort to tackle public health challenges of our time, as well as ensuring the provision of high quality, accessible, equitable, efficient*

*and sensitive health services which ensure continuity of care and address people's rights and changing needs. Munich Declaration: Nurses and midwives: a Force for Health, 2000,*

Nurses should be enabled to provide high quality care efficiently and effectively and to their full potential, both as independent and as interdependent professionals.

Dear colleagues,

I am aware that the program of the conference includes numerous, important professional issues and that you are eager listening to what presenters prepared for us. With this in mind, all that remains for me is to welcome you, once again, to Cyprus and to express my wish that you find your stay with us rewarding, interesting and enjoyable.

Thank you,

Ioannis Leontiou

President

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