



Global Nursing Workforce: Problems and Perspectives

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Health Workforce Crisis

- Ø Shortage of 4.3 million health workers
- Ø 57 countries are “in crisis”
- Ø Shortage of qualified health workers is an obstacle to the United Nations MDGs
- Ø In Canada, 50% of nurses employed today will retire within 10 years
- Ø In the US, shortfall of 800,000 to one million nurses is projected by 2012.

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What is driving this increased demand?

- Ø Ageing population;
- Ø Rising population growth rate;
- Ø Growing chronic and non-communicable diseases;
- Ø Shorter hospital stays/increased acuity of care;

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What is driving this increased demand? (Cont'd)

- Ø Globalisation and a growing private sector;
- Ø High public trust in nurses
- Ø Changes in intern/junior doctor working conditions
- Ø Increasing mobility

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Decreased Supply of Nurses

- Ø An ageing nursing workforce;
- Ø Increased career opportunities for women;
- Ø Increasing number choosing nursing later in life
- Ø Decreased funding of nursing schools
- Ø A poor image of nursing as a career
- Ø Unfavourable work environments

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Global Nursing Shortage - Priority

- Ø Macroeconomics and health sector funding policies;
- Ø Workforce policy and planning, including regulation;
- Ø Retention and recruitment;
- Ø Positive practice environments
- Ø Nursing leadership

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Macroeconomics and health sector funding policies

- Ø Kenya spends 76 cents per capita on HIV/AIDS and \$12.93 per capita on serving the debt
- Ø Zambia spends 30% more on debt servicing than on health care
- Ø Drastic cuts in public spending
- Ø WHO and ICN paper: www.icn.ch

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Workforce policy and planning, including regulation

- Ø Better data and planning
- Ø Nurses involved at all levels
- Ø Dynamics between human resources for health and patient outcomes
- Ø Regulation Network, Observatories and Credentialing Forums

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Recruitment and retention

- Ø Difficulty recruiting new nurses into the profession and retaining existing ones
- Ø Better infrastructure
- Ø Appropriate incentives
- Ø Salaries and benefits
- Ø Continuing education opportunities
- Ø Ethical recruitment practices

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Positive practice environments are a must

- Ø Poor quality of nurses' practice environments
- Ø Work overload is detrimental to quality of patient care
- Ø Global campaign - www.ichrn.org



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Nursing leadership

- Leadership for Change
- Global Nursing Leadership Institute
- Leadership in Negotiation



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Conclusion

- Ø Solutions must be innovative, multi-faceted and sustainable
- Ø Address the root causes of nurse shortages
- Ø Contribute to improved health systems performance



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