

Nurses Association of Jamaica



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY - MAY 12, 2024

Henry Ford posited, *'Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.'*

I greet you warmly on this International Nurses Day from the Nurses Association of Jamaica, Officers and Executive members. IND is celebrated each year on May 12 in recognition of the birth of Florence Nightingale who was born on this day in Florence, Italy in 1820. She was a social reformer, statistician and the founder of Modern Nursing. One of her greatest achievements was to transform Nursing into a respectable profession. Today, we build on the legacy of this transformational nurse.

ICN is a Federation of more than 130 NNAs around the world representing over 28 million nurses. Every year, an IND kit is prepared and circulated to all NNAs as a guide to the combined celebration of the day. This year, the theme is *'Our Nurses. Our Future. The Economic Power of Care'*.

Despite being the backbone of healthcare, Nursing often faces financial constraints and societal undervaluation. IND aims to reshape perceptions, demonstrating how strategic investment in Nursing can bring considerable economic and societal benefits.' – Dr Pamela Cipriano – ICN President.

At a time such as this, we seek to embrace the profession of nursing. We honour our nurses who continue to work through adverse situations and under duress in the existing poor working environment. The lack of resources continue to be the voice of the advocacy body as we seek to ensure that Government is held accountable for providing the necessary resources needed to provide care to our clients. Remuneration continues to be a struggle, as we seek to remain financially stable in the existing economy. This causes the advocacy body to remain in constant dialogue with the relevant stakeholders, as we seek to get what is deserving and ensure that we remain relevant financially. The socio economic welfare of our members remain foremost in our discussions with the Government.

It is our hope, that all stakeholders will recognize the influence that comes through quality health care, recognize that Nurses make up the majority of the health care provision workforce, and that it is important that we all understand our roles in shaping the perceptions of the profession and the professional.

In the executive summary of the ICN 2024 IND Report, we are reminded that *'Investments that increase the productivity or the health workforce result in: Good Health, Economic Growth, Job Creation, and Productive Gains in other sectors.'*

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The Report also looks at some key insights that are significant to us here in Jamaica, the Region and the Diaspora. These include but are not limited to the following statements:

- Poor health costs the global economy 15% of GDP which is 2 to 5 times greater than the expected loss from COVID-19 – we are still observing situations based on the impact
- Realizing the potential of nurses working in Primary Health Care (PHC) to support the delivery of essential Universal Health Coverage (UHC) interventions could contribute to the saving of lives and increase global life expectancy – In Jamaica, we are currently undergoing Primary Health Care Reform
- Create decent jobs in Nursing supports the alleviation of poverty and addresses gender equality in the global workforce – the gap needs to be adjusted to meet the growing needs
- Ensuring the safety of nurses should be considered an imperative for sustainable and resilient health systems – the exposure of nurses to violence or adverse situations is a current cause for concern for the NAJ
- Investing in safe care saves money. Safe staffing with the right skills mix allows for the reduction in safety issues or adverse events. – this Insight can be addressed through training and recruitment
- Nurses contribute to peace by reducing inequalities and promoting human rights and the delivery of social justice – this speaks for itself.

ICN advances nursing, nurses and health through its policies, partnerships, advocacy, leadership development, networks, campaigns, congresses and special projects. ICN believes that the economic power of care creates healthy people and societies and drives healthy economies.

IND 2023 saw the creation of the ICN Charter for change which speaks to the following;

- Protect and invest in the Nursing profession
- Urgently address and improve support for Nurses' health and wellbeing by ensuring safe and healthy working conditions and respecting their rights
- 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
- Develop, implement and finance national nursing workforce plans
- Invest in high quality, accredited nursing education programs
- Enable nurses to work their full scope of nursing practice
- Recognize and value nurses' skills, knowledge, attributes and expertise
- Actively and meaningfully engage National Nurses Associations
- Protect vulnerable populations, uphold and respect human rights, gender equity and social justice
- Appoint Nurse Leaders

These elements have become increasingly relevant as we seek to maintain the visibility of the profession. We have seen drastic reductions in the areas stated before, where the work and worth of nurses have come in for scrutiny by all stakeholders involved. The training of Nursing Students has not been emphasizing on the protection and investment in the profession, causing the observation of the deterioration in professionalism and moral

standards. However, we bask in the glory of our achievements. We have accredited nursing education programs, we recently achieved prescriptive rights for our Advanced Practice RNs, our NNA is actively and meaningfully engaged by various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, and we have Nurse Leaders strategically placed in positions of influence and for these accomplishments we are eternally grateful. We have come a long way and we have much to give thanks for.

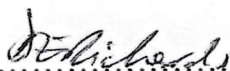
Stephen Covey reminds us, *'I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions.'* As we go out in our different facilities and our various disciplines, always remember that, you made the decision to become a Nurse. Be the best Nurse you can be. Perform your duties responsibly. Be reminded of your commitment to professionalism and your ethical responsibility.

The ICN has issued a Call to Action for Global Health Leaders and Policymakers. The requests include; Empower Nurses, Invest in education and workforce development, Enhance working conditions, Acknowledge and Compensate fairly, and Promote Nursing's role in society. We can achieve all this and more as we work together to achieve set goals. Monitoring and evaluation of our existing systems will help us to make these achievements.

'Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.' – Helen Keller

I call on ALL our stakeholders, here and abroad: Let us not be weary in well-doing, but let us join hands, heart and resources, to continue to fly the banner of nursing higher as we seek to make our voices heard, creating a positive impact on the lives of those that we interact with.

The Nurses Association of Jamaica will continue to work on behalf of membership to meet the stated mandates and to propel the profession to the highest attainable levels. We will continue to engage our critical stakeholders on matters of interest to the profession and continue to blaze the trail as we remain 'United in Service'. I thank you.



Dawn Marie Richards (Mrs)

President