Achieving health-related Millennium Development Goals: strengthening nursing and midwifery workforce in the WHO European Region

The European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations and WHO,

1. CONSCIOUS that nurses and midwives are the largest proportion of the health workforce, providing expert, skilled care to the population of Europe;
2. UNDERSTANDING that professional knowledge and research is the basis to guarantee evidence-based practice for the benefit of the people;
3. AWARE that developing professional roles affects the contribution to health service development and delivery;
4. UNDERSTANDING that comprehensive workforce planning strategies, legislative and regulatory frameworks are needed to enable nurses and midwives to work effectively, efficiently and promote patient safety;
5. AWARE of the importance of a high level of initial education and continuous professional development;
6. CONCERNED that financial constraints may undermine the future development of nurses and midwives and lead to a decrease in a minimum level of initial professional education;
7. RECOGNIZING the need for conceptualising, determining and measuring quality of nursing and midwifery services;

URGES nurses and midwives to:

8. demonstrate the impact of nurses and midwives on health outcomes and thus strengthen their role as a resource for better health;
9. participate in the development of effective and efficient nursing and midwifery services;
10. engage in nursing and midwifery research as being essential to effective health service;
11. comply with their code of practice and maintain and update their competence as part of their professional accountability;
12. promote interprofessional education and collaborative practice1;

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URGES governments to:

13. note that nursing and midwifery practice is a fundamental resource for health and that the core functions performed by nurses and midwives are vital to health systems and services;
14. guarantee nurses and midwives the professional education that will enable them to practice and function within an ever changing work environment and increasingly demanding situations;
15. include health professionals in the development of quality indicator information gathering systems in order to efficiently evaluate quality of care;
16. use staffing and performance monitoring tools, in order to effectively plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the use of health care resources;
17. support nursing and midwifery research in order to underpin nursing and midwifery practice and to generate knowledge;
18. support the development of autonomous national nursing and midwifery professional associations/organizations in order to strengthen the professions;
19. involve professional nursing and midwifery associations/organizations in the capacity building of health care systems;
20. adopt existing global definitions of nurses and midwives, protect the title of nurses and midwives to ensure reliable data for workforce planning policies, patient safety, proper registration and professional mobility;

URGES National Nursing Associations and National Midwifery Associations to:

21. engage with governments to build and strengthen capacity in health care systems to achieve health-related Millennium Development Goals;
22. strengthen and advance the role of nurses and midwives through advocating for education, legislation and regulation;
23. advocate for the improvement of management, leadership and positive practice and working environment within health care services;
24. respond to significant demographic and epidemiological changes through assuring and improving the quality of care;
25. support lifelong learning activities so that nurses and midwives can meet current challenges and changes in population demographics and health systems enhancement;
26. promote the development and use of quality and performance indicators to measure patient safety and quality of care.

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