

The Minister of Health
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
Suur-Ameerika 1
10112 Tallinn
Estonia

13 March 2026

Your Excellency,

Re: Nurses at the World Health Organization's 79th World Health Assembly, 18-23 May 2026, Geneva, Switzerland

I am writing on behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and our national nurses' association (NNA) members to encourage you to include a nurse in your country's delegation to the 79th session of the World Health Assembly (WHA). As a federation of NNAs representing the over 30 million nurses in over 140 countries we are committed to ensuring quality of care and sound health policies globally and view the discussions and decisions of the WHA as very significant to nurses.

Nurses are an important partner in setting and enacting health policy and, over the years, we have seen the benefits of nursing input in the deliberations of the WHA. Having nurses' perspective in the current debate and policy setting in national, regional and international forums will enhance the range of robust and practical solutions required to address global health challenges.

We would also like to use this important opportunity to meet with you to brief you on ICN's work and key priorities on the WHA agenda in order to support and advance nursing in your country. To arrange a bilateral meeting please contact my Executive Assistant, Marie Carrillo (carrillo@icn.ch).

The 79th WHA agenda contains several items where involvement of the nursing profession in the discussion is critical. These include mental health; noncommunicable diseases; immunization; primary healthcare; international recruitment of health personnel; 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; data, digital health and artificial intelligence; antimicrobial resistance; well-being and health promotion; rehabilitation systems; health of Indigenous Peoples; public

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health and social measures; maternal, infant and young child nutrition; health emergency preparedness and response; substandard and falsified medical products; economics of health for all.

The enormous pressures on health care professionals and the underinvestment in the nursing profession have placed the nursing workforce in a very precarious place. The nursing shortage is currently estimated at 6 million. The care and leadership of nurses to address global health challenges everywhere must be supported and valued. Including a nurse in your delegation is critical to ensure nurses are valued decision- makers and that their unique expertise is included in solutions to address current and future health challenges.

Nurse leaders in your country hold great power in their ability to transform health systems and we urge you to harness this power by ensuring their involvement and their voice is heard at the WHA. We look forward to meeting you and a nurse delegate from your country.

Yours sincerely,



Howard Catton
Chief Executive Officer

c.c.: Presidents/Executive Directors/General Secretaries of ICN NNAs member