



2020 - International Year of Nursing: Challenges and Achievements (and other challenges)

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On May 24, 2019, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the Nursing Now Campaign announced the celebration of 2020 as the International Year of Nurses and Midwives during the 72nd World Health Assembly in Geneva. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that: "WHO is proud to propose the year 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife. These two health professions are invaluable for the health of people everywhere.

Without nurses and midwives, we will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals or universal health coverage."

On that occasion, CIE President Annette Kennedy thanked WHO for her acquiescence and related the celebration to the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, one of the founders of modern nursing.¹

This sum of unprecedented initiatives in the world is an opportunity for the work of nurses and midwives to be better known and valued by societies as vital elements for the lives

and quality of life of populations. May governments be able to awaken and act to the needs of training, protection and valorization of these professionals.

Scientific and commemorative events, publications, conference broadcasts and other activities were included in the calendar of the year in the search for greater connection between nurses and midwives and with local and transnational communities.

Building on the foundation of the Nightingale Training School at St. Thomas Hospital and the publication of "Note on Nursing: What it is and what it is not" (1860) by Florence Nightingale, we have 160 years of changes in the knowledge and ethics and values to human care, an essential activity for life.

It is important to highlight that the second half of the 19th century is the social panorama of what is called the Second Industrial Revolution with evident examples in the largest urban centers. Modern life amenities available to the bourgeoisie contrasted with the poor living conditions of the working classes.

By advocating for a broader and more prominent space for nurses, the overwhelming majority being women, to work with high-level training with public investments, in the well-known Victorian period, Florence sparked a process that in 30 years culminated in the enactment of the prohibition on hiring nurses without training on the bases established by it. ²

The continued work of international leaders and aggregation of values and institutions such as the World Labor Organization, feminist leaders, agreements and disagreements with religious or lay entities with the International Red Cross and the work of the

International Council of Nurses (1899) established a professional identity for nursing. Naturally, there is a great diversity between this identity in the more than 130 national entities that make up the ICN.

This discussion on the professional identity of nursing contains elements of a more objective order such as the social needs and characteristics of this work, the necessary training for the exercise of these activities, the development of appropriate methodologies to solve the health problems of individuals and communities, availability of professionals for this range of needs, the division of these activities in the social world; the sale of labor and nursing knowledge.

There are also subjective issues such as vocations or personal characteristics for the exercise of this profession.

Some of these questions already have more elaborate answers, others are being modified, for example, with the rapid expansion of knowledge, technologies and the availability of resources of all kinds of training and professional exercise of the first human need, receiving care that sustains and qualify life, from conception to the final moments and even after these.

With a full schedule of events and expectations for 2020, we ended 2019 and in December news began to circulate about the discovery of a new virus that infected humans in the city of Wuhan in mainland China with high transmissibility and devastating effects on respiratory system.

In the following weeks, the world was haunted by the rapid spread of the already identified new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and the World Health Organization's declaration

of a pandemic in 114 countries, according to director-general Tedros Adhanom in 11 March 2020. This announcement came along with the request for nations to activate and expand their emergency response mechanisms.

From then on, nursing was called upon to make an enormous effort to mobilize its capacities to work directly with patients, prevent spreading, produce responses in the areas of education, crisis management in institutions and communities, and appropriate scientific and technological development.

Nursing workers from around the world responded to the call of their oaths and commitment to the community. Soon we received images of the great impact of COVID 19 in the health services of the world and the news that Brazil would also experience this dramatic situation.

In just a few weeks, our health system has been weakened by years of management problems that have not been solved for a long time and at the end of April the country already suffered with more than 85,000 confirmed cases, very close to 6,000 deaths and lethality rate more than 6%.³

The year of celebration became a year of great challenge for nursing professionals. Overwork, low wages, long and often double working hours. An unknown disease, high risks of contamination that sadly victimized many colleagues.

Even in the initial months of the year, we have already demonstrated the fundamental role for societies; that we have training, willingness and courage to face vigorous confrontations. We hope to overcome this health crisis that has sacrificed many lives, many to exhaustion. There are no easy stru-

ggles and achievements for nursing and we will continue with them.

The year 2020 is going through a crisis that we have never experienced before; we hope to end 2020 stronger in order to fight for better positions in the social fabric. I am honored to be able to say that I am part of this profession. I am thankful for being able to register these words here, I congratulate my colleagues, valuable professionals who dedicate their lives to the care of others.

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