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**“Nurses are key to healthcare for refugees and migrants”
says International Council of Nurses**

Geneva, Switzerland; 11 September 2015. As the largest group of health professionals in the world, nurses are key to providing cost effective care during the refugee crisis in Europe. While politicians discuss ways to handle the crisis, nurses throughout Europe are at the forefront providing care for the sick and injured.

“The International Council of Nurses has tremendous respect for the work of nurses in this crisis, as in the many disasters and conflicts across the world,” said Judith Shamian, ICN President. “We would like to thank them for their support and care for those who are suffering.”

In the refugee camps in Europe, cramped living and poor facilities for hygiene can cause outbreaks of cholera, measles and scabies, Poor nutrition is adding to an increase in heart disease and diabetes. In addition, many refugees and migrants suffer injuries as

they make their way to safety. The World Medical Association recently called for governments to ensure that migrants and refugees receive full access to healthcare, stating that “it was essential that the health care of migrants and refugees was not neglected in a bid to save money.”[1]

“Nurses provide cost effective healthcare, and open access to healthcare for all”, said Pierre Théraulaz, ICN’s Acting Chief Executive Officer. “They are at the heart of the community and have a unique opportunity to put people at the centre of care, making services more effective, efficient and equitable.” It is this presence of nurses at the forefront of healthcare providing a continuum of care that is a defining characteristic of nursing.[2]

Earlier this year, Chris Maher, manager of WHO’s emergency support team for the Syria crisis, said, “Governments dealing with the fallout of the Syria crisis are under incredible strain to address the health needs of their own people in addition to those of Syrian refugees. There is drastic need for increased funding, particularly for the health sector to ensure the continued provision of health services and to build and strengthen national systems so that they are able to cope with the increased burden.” [3]

Nurses can make significant contributions to improving health systems’ resilience. They have an important contribution to make in health services planning and decision-making, and in development of appropriate and effective health policy. They can and should contribute to public policy related to preparation of health workers, care delivery systems, health care financing, ethics in health care and determinants of health.

Note for Editors

The **International Council of Nurses** (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

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