



Professional Associations: Meeting societal, professional and partner expectations

Pan American Network of Human
Resources in Health
Toronto
October 2005

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International Council of Nurses

- Established in 1899; led by nurses
- 128 member NNAs
- Speaks for more than 13 million
- First and widest reaching international organisation for health professionals
- 3 main pillars of Regulation, Professional Practice and Socio-Economic Welfare
- Sees HHR as a priority; currently addressing NHRD

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Changing landscape of health services

- continuing restructuring/reform – doing more with less
- shorter length of stay/sicker patients at home, in hospital
- ageing populations and professions
- high consumer expectations; desire for choice and voice
- call for more governance, treatment and risk transparency

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Changing landscape of health services, cont.

- move to community care slowly continues
- wider array of health workers
- changing/overlapping scopes of practice
- more specialisation, more regulation
- decrease in professional role in regulation
- quickly out-dated knowledge
- higher demands on families to provide care

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Changing landscape of health services, cont.

- mix of eastern and western approaches to care
- internet information and services; transnational care
- mobile workforce and patient population – e.g. health tourism
- commodification of health professions
- high tech focus – treating symptoms; loss of “touch”

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Changing landscape of health services, cont.

- cultural mix of patients and professionals - fit?
- increasing unserved/under-served populations
- increasing competition for services/staff
- growing privatisation
- more violence
- staff and infrastructure availability/quality
- continuing impact of HIV/AIDS
- large scale disasters
- educating for export; relying on migrants for care

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Challenges for health workers

a. With respect to competencies

- ensuring competence to practice, including new competencies (e.g. delegation/supervision; dealing with new diseases and disasters; cultural competence; computer/hi tech equipment; when to refer/hand off patients; nurse prescribing, telehealth)
- access to information/continuing education/clinical placements
- opportunity to practice the new competencies
- having the resources to practice safely.

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Challenges for health workers

b. With respect to inter-professional relations

- courtesy, respect
- being heard
- achieving real collaboration
- acceptance of new roles

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Challenges for health workers

c. With respect to migration

- deciding whether and where to go
- safely integrating and supporting new grads and migrants
- coping when migrants exit and leave units short staffed
- knowing how many are on the move
- getting information and registered as a migrant
- dealing with discrimination in the new work situation
- getting equal pay, benefits and promotion opportunities as a migrant nurse.

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Challenges for health workers

d. Other

- patient and personal safety
- fragmented care/limited continuum of care
- promoting evidence and innovations at same time
- supervising staff from multiple agencies
- coping with exhaustion, overtime, demoralised staff

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Role of Professional Associations

- a. Prepare practitioners
 - set standards and competencies for the profession (e.g. Generalist Nurse; APN; telenursing).
 - offer continuing education/ resources/access to resources (Leadership for Change; Mobile Library)

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Role of Professional Associations, cont.

- b. Offer public services (e.g. Patient Talk; Girl Child Education Fund; Birth Registration campaign)
- c. Help establish sound health policy and programmes
 - work with key agencies; develop joint ventures (e.g. Workplace Violence Campaign; ICNM)

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Role of Professional Associations, cont.

- d. advocate for policy and services (patient, public and practitioner focus)
 - use joint ventures such as HEAL, WHPA
- e. Support research
 - migration study

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The interests of the profession and public mesh more than some expect (e.g. higher professional ratios mean more positive outcomes for the patient and a more satisfying work situation for the nurse; improved working conditions mean better morale, less absenteeism and turnover and ultimately better patient care).

Most nursing issues relate to the lack of a positive practice environment.

Solutions need not be costly.

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