

# INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

EXPANDING THE ROLE OF NURSES IN  
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

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CARICOM

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# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Nurses as leaders in PHC
- Driving factors for expanding the role of Nurses in PHC
- Challenges
- Way forward

# NURSES AS LEADERS IN PHC

- Nurses are at the forefront in PHC service delivery
- Nurses engage in health protection, health promotion, disease prevention, rehabilitation and palliative care at the community level.
- Nurses ensure that care is delivered safely, effectively and compassionately, to individuals, families and communities
- Provide holistic care taking into consideration the physical, psychosocial and spiritual aspects of the individual

# EXPANDING THE ROLE OF THE NURSE

- Educator
- Counselor
- Patient advocate
- Change agent
- Researcher
- Leader
- Manager
- Collaborator

# DRIVING FACTORS

- EPIDEMIOLOGY AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

As epidemiologic and demographic profiles change, Nurses must have the relevant competencies to respond to the needs of the population.

# EPIDEMIOLOGIC CHANGES

- In the Caribbean, the 4 major NCDs are cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases. (HCC Strategic Plan, 2017-2021)
- Their common risk factors are tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity
- The Region has the highest mortality from NCDs in the Region of the Americas.

- NCDs cause 3 out of every 4 deaths (HCC Strategic Plan 2017-2021)
- 40% of deaths due to NCDs occur prematurely in persons under 70 yrs of age
- Ministries of Health throughout the Region expending 60% or more of their health budgets on NCDs and their complications
- NCDs directly impact economies, health systems and households as a result of decreased productivity due to absenteeism,



disability, reduced functionality and fewer years of worker output.

- The social determinants of health – the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life exert significant effects on health and wellbeing.
- Many SDH lie outside the purview of MOH and the Health Sector
- Nurses must recognize and understand the impact of the SDH on population health outcomes



- The situation requires a multi - sectoral, whole of government, whole of society, health in –all policies approaches to NCDs as stated in the Port of Spain Declaration and the 2011 United Nations High –Level Meeting Political Declaration on NCD prevention and control.

# Role of the Nurse

- Identifying high risk populations
- Screening
- Health education and counseling on healthy lifestyle practices
- Community outreach programs
- Advocacy efforts that contribute to drafting and enactment of national legislation and policies

- Collaborate with NGOs, CSOs and FBOs
- Partner with legislators and inter-professional leaders to identify, implement and evaluate approaches that engages communities in addressing health issues
- Strengthen the whole-of-society, health –in- all policies approaches that are critical for effective NCD prevention and control

# New and Re-emerging Diseases

- The Caribbean also faces the threat of new and re-emerging diseases, such as chikungunya, zika, ebola, H1N1
- These diseases respect no national boundaries
- Nurses have a key role to play in emerging disease prevention, response and management
- Roles include public education, contact tracing, taking accurate health histories, sample collection, investigation, monitoring and other surveillance measures.

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- Need to adequately prepare nurses to respond to pandemics of potentially catastrophic proportions

# Demographic Changes

- The Caribbean has one of the fastest growing older populations in the world
- In 2000, 10% of the population in several Caribbean Countries was over 60 years old
- Chronic diseases and other co-morbidities are associated with aging
- The demand for health care services increases among the elderly population

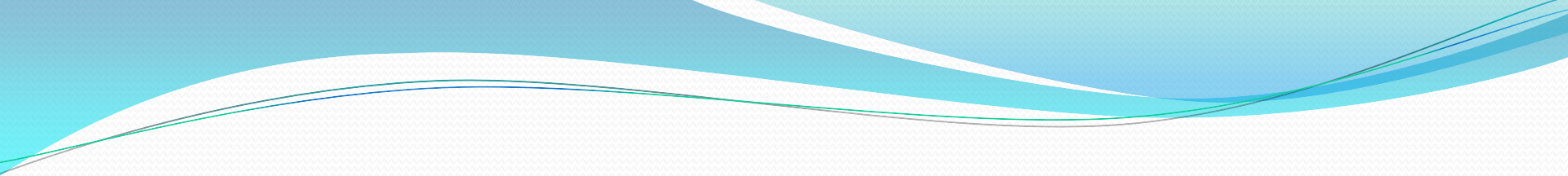
# Implication for Nursing

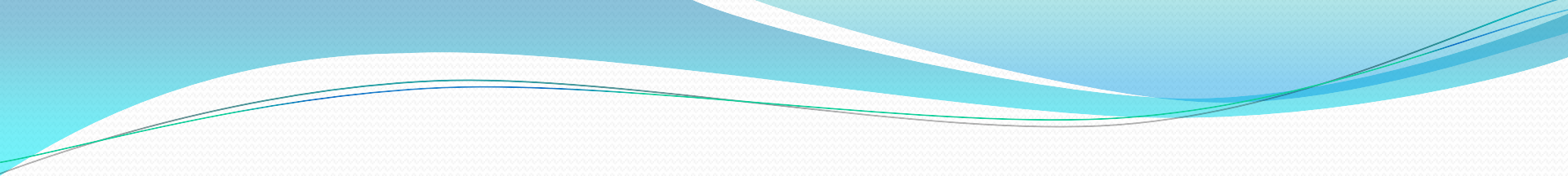
- Education and training for nurses in geriatric care. Nurses need to possess basic competencies to meet the demands of an aging and diverse society with an emphasis on clinical training in multiple settings across the lifespan
- Increase need for home - based Care
- Implications for numbers, distribution and skills sets of health workers


# Universal Access and Universal Health Coverage

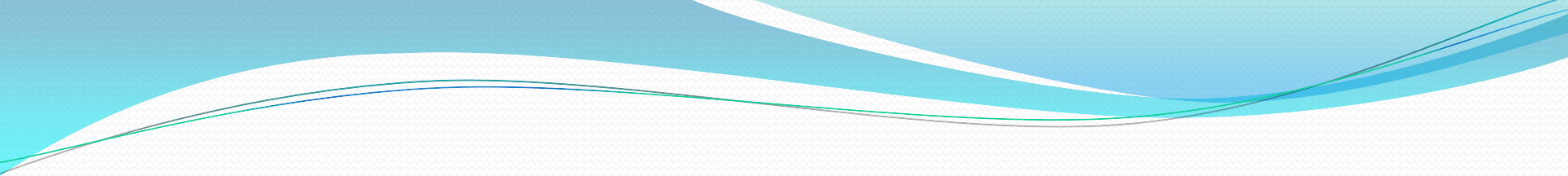
- PAHO/WHO, 2014, at its 53<sup>rd</sup> Directing Council resolved that based on the changing epidemiological profiles and the levels of inequities within health systems, Universal Health must be adopted as a core strategy for addressing these challenges.



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- Nurses represent the single, most dominant group among health professions and are strategically placed to support the achievement of this goal


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- Infusion of Universal Health in nursing and midwifery curricula in the Region is important. Effective universal health requires adequate preparation of health personnel for the delivery of quality services at an acceptable standard.
  - Curricula, teaching and learning must undergo radical transformation. Nursing programs have traditionally been content driven but the needs of the students and faculty are changing.

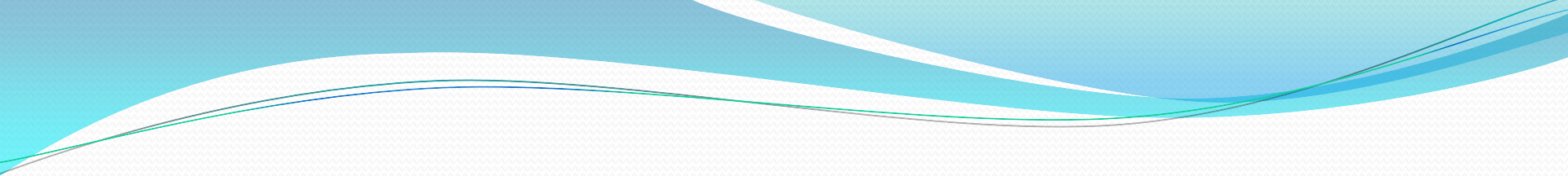
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- At the core of these new and revised curricula is an emphasis on integrating established educational and professional competencies with educational strategies that encourage problem solving and enhances students' critical thinking abilities.



Integration of classroom and clinical teaching is also important. Strengthen and develop collaborative partnerships between education institutions and service (hospitals and other health care organizations) to develop innovative capacity

Expanding approaches for preparing Nurses, Midwives and Nursing and Midwifery Educators and to foster the expansion of nursing and midwifery education programs.

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- Nurse Educators has a critical role to play in terms of the ensuring that the Nurse coming out of an educational program, has the requisite knowledge, attitude and skills required to meet the needs of the population

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- There would also be the need to increase the production of nurses
  - Evidenced informed practices by Nurses working in the community
  - CPD for nurses to update their knowledge and skills
  - Nursing services must be accessible to underserved and difficult to reach populations
  - Advanced practice nurses

# Migration of Nurses

- Loss of highly skilled nursing workforce
- Promote retention
- Motivate health workers

# Climate Change

- Increased Frequency of disasters, such as, hurricanes and earthquakes
- A review of mental health in disaster situations in the region presented data –albeit-limited on psychotic, mood and anxiety disorders, suicide and dementia
- Nurses play a critical role in disaster management
- Nursing services must respond to disasters
- Develop core competence in personal resilience among nursing and other front line personnel in disaster management



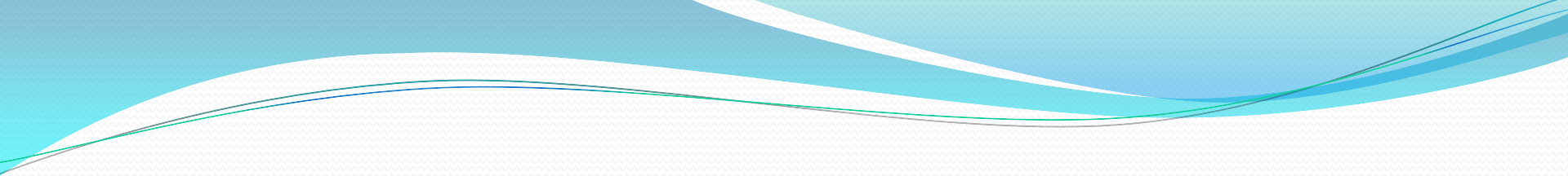
- Build capacity among first responders, through in-service training and continuing education and encourage inter - professional learning for collaborative practice.
- Training programs for nurses to equip them with the knowledge and skills to provide psychological support to populations affected by disasters.
- Integration of mental health services into PHC

# Challenges

- Professional resistance to expanded scopes of practice
- Fragmented health systems
- High turnover among nurses
- Nursing education – there is a need for greater numbers and better preparation. Also needed are new and relevant competencies, lifelong learning and inter-professional education

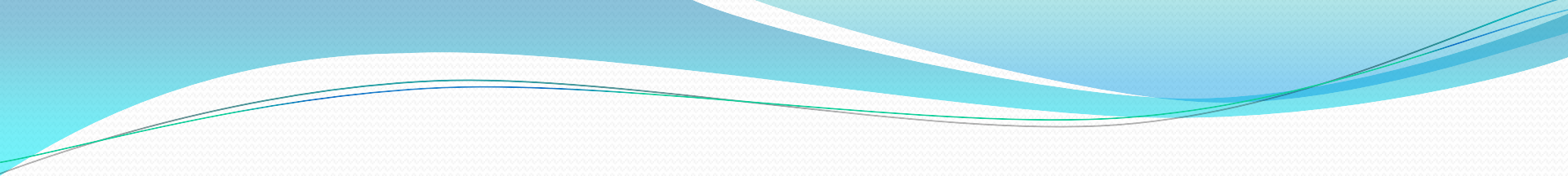
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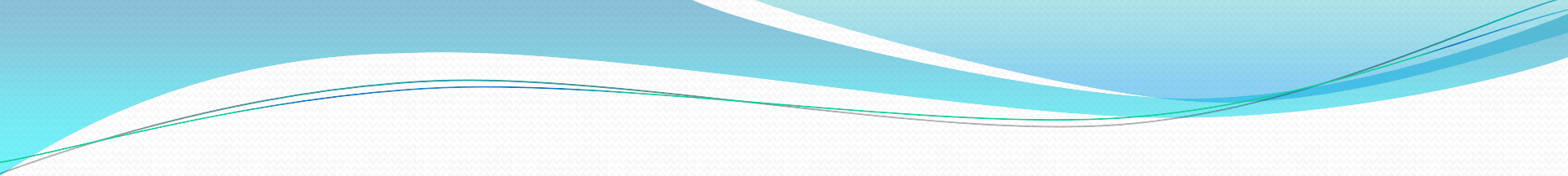
- Weak leadership and management skills among middle level managers
- Collaborative environments in which nurses can learn and practice
- Insufficient nurses with training in specialized areas
- Competition for clinical space
- Inadequate succession planning

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- Quality of Nurse Educators –  
Strengthen faculty teaching capacity
  - Inadequate funding and scholarship opportunities for advanced nursing education and training
  - Inadequate nurse: patient ratios in clinical settings

# Way Forward

- Integrate classroom and clinical teaching and close the gap between education and practice
- Change the focus of the curriculum to incorporate UHC
- Make the curriculum relevant to the future needs of the population
- Clinical placements

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- Foster inter-professional education, collaboration and practice. Teamwork and collaboration are critical to seamless high-quality care. The process begins with understanding the roles and responsibilities of each healthcare discipline.
  - Strengthen nursing leadership at all levels
  - Generate evidence and engage in research
  - Expand the use of technology – electronic medical records, use of simulation labs, online classes
  - CPD including skills development with a focus based on needs

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- Advocacy, networking and effective partnership
  - Produce more advance practice nurses/Nurse Practitioners
  - Offer nursing education programs at the BSN level and above
  - Accreditation and standards

# References

- Healthy Caribbean Coalition, Strategic Plan 2017-2021.
- PAHO 29<sup>th</sup> Pan American Sanitary Conference, 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas, Washington, D.C, USA, 25-29 September, 2017.
- Strategy on Human Resources for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage.
- “Emerging Global Health Issues: A Nurses Role.” The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing.





THANK YOU