

Global issues are our issues



Nurses around the world focus on healthcare quality and access.

WHILE a lack of access to health care, widespread poverty and hunger, low literacy, and poor population health may be shrouded in the United States, these challenges are ever-present here and around the world. This May, at the largest-ever International Council of Nurses (ICN) Congress in Barcelona, Spain, I was among the 8,000 nurses from over 130 nations who gathered to learn more about and advance nurse-led solutions to these global issues with the aim of attaining the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, a 15-year agenda to "end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all." Goal 10, reduced inequalities, calls for tackling the refractory social determinants of health that affect one's quality of life and health across the life span. And it's nurses who are mobilizing globally to demonstrate their impact on breaking down the barriers that have prevented the underserved, vulnerable, and disadvantaged populations from enjoying good health.

Nurses—the key to global health

Government health leaders from a variety of countries acclaimed nurses as the key to global health. Topics included innovative primary care models, empowering women, climate change effects on health, telenursing, and policies that will change the trajectory of health. One of the most meaningful moments came when Ambassador William Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration, framed one of the most urgent humanitarian issues—migrants, refugees, and displaced persons—this way: "Migration is not a problem to be solved. It is a human reality to be managed." His comments shed light on the critical role of nurses to bridge the survival, social, economic, and health needs of these people. ICN will refine a position statement on the issue later this year.

Celebrating U.S. nurses

As the United States' national nursing organization member of the ICN, I had the pleasure of representing ANA along with Enterprise CEO Dr. Marla Weston and American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) President Dr. Patricia Reid Ponte. ANA and ANCC presented 5 concurrent sessions, a policy café, and a poster. Many other

U.S. nurses attended as featured presenters. Dr. Mary Wakefield, former acting deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provided the opening keynote speech on the critical responsibility of nurses to lead changes that will strengthen healthcare systems through involvement in health policy.

We also celebrated U.S. nurses who were among those honored for their achievements:

- Dr. Linda Aiken, professor and director of the Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, received the prestigious Christiane Reimann Prize, nursing's highest international award, for her pioneering and highly influential body of research on nurse staffing and implications for patient outcomes. She presented her most recent findings to a standing ovation.
- Dr. Nancy E. Glass, professor, associate dean for research, and associate director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Global Health, received the ICN International Achievement Award for her work on intimate partner violence.
- Dr. Beth Oliver, vice president of cardiac services, and Arlene Travis, nurse clinician in the cardiac-care center, at the Mount Sinai Health System were the first runner up awardees for the Kim Mo Im Policy Innovation Impact Award, recognizing their innovative work to empower individuals and communities to improve cardiovascular health.

A driving force

At the closing session, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, new director-general of the World Health Organization, hailed nursing's leadership role in driving improved quality and more affordable care, and pledged to reinstate a senior level nurse within his team. He stressed his belief that nurses are the linchpin for achieving the sustainable development goals.

Annette Kennedy of Ireland was elected ICN president for 2017-2021 along with 13 board members. I'm pleased to report that I was elected to the board and will serve as first vice president. I look forward to contributing to the governance of ICN and our shared agenda to strengthen nursing at home and abroad, and to help solve our critical global issues. ★



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