

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists
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Health Department commemorates International Nurses Day – 12 May

Pretoria: The Department of Health calls for all hands on deck in protection of nurses and other health workers to create conducive working environment, as the country joins the global community to commemorate International Nurses Day on Monday, 12 May.

Nurses are the backbone of any healthcare system, serving as the main point of contact for patients and an important link between patients and the care they need. They also play a critical role in counselling and educating patients and their families about their health conditions, available treatment plans, and self-care strategies.

Nurses continue to face various workplace safety threats on the line of duty, both physically and verbally from patients and community members. The country has in the recent months and years, experienced disgraceful incidents of heinous acts which involved robbery and sexual assault against nurses, mainly in the primary health facilities.

The Department recognizes the importance of a healthy and well-supported nursing workforce to deliver quality healthcare services for the country to achieve the health outcomes which include increased life expectancy and reduced maternal, infant and child mortality.

It is for this reason that the Department appeals to all stakeholders in the society to join hands with government, law enforcement agencies and various community-based structures to make health facilities safer places for nurses to carry-out their duties of caring for the sick and provide much needed comprehensive healthcare without fear of becoming victims of crime.

The 2025 the International Nurses Day is commemorated under the theme: “***Our Nurses. Our Future. Caring for nurses strengthens economies***”, which emphasises the significance of healthy nursing workforce in providing high-quality care, as well as for improving healthcare systems and increasing economic resilience on a global scale.

International Nurses Day is a global healthcare event commemorated annually on the 12th of May to honour Florence Nightingale's birth anniversary, who is commonly considered the pioneer of modern nursing.

The Country will on Monday, 12 May participate in the global launch of the State of the World's Nursing 2025 hosted by World Health Organization and International Council of Nurses, where the findings on employment, education, service delivery and nurse leadership including key take-away and policy directions will be critically discussed.

Meanwhile, the Department will in the next coming months recruit additional 200 nurses as part of phased implementation of Human Resources for Health Strategy 2030 to invest in the health workforce for Universal Health Coverage, while also reducing workload and burnout among nursing staff because a well-staffed environment allows for better patient care.

Sufficient numbers of well skilled, enabled and supported health workforce is central to the achievement of affordable, accessible and quality health care system for all as envisaged in the NHI Act.

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