



International Council of Nurses
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International Council of Nurses launches Consultation to revise Code of Ethics for Nurses

Geneva, Switzerland; 21 October 2020 – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) today launched a consultation on the revision of its ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses. Given the challenges facing nurses today, including technology, social justice and changing models of care, ICN's newly revised and refreshed Code of Ethics must respond to the new realities of healthcare and nursing.

“Nurses face ethical dilemmas on a daily basis,” said ICN President Annette Kennedy. “While the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the difficulties nurses face, disasters, conflict and political divisions all increase the pressures confronting nurses. The ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses helps to guide nurses’ decision-making and enable them to provide the highest quality care to everyone they serve – no matter what the circumstances.”

“As one of the most trusted professions in the world, nursing is held to a high standard,” said ICN CEO Howard Catton. “Changing technologies mean we have to make choices we didn’t have to make before; issues of social justice have come to the forefront and – as a profession – we must ensure nurses are seen as allies in the fight against discrimination and champions of human rights. The newly revised ICN Code of Ethics will reflect these changes in society and help to guide nurses to make the right decisions.”

A guide for action based on social values and needs, the ICN Code of Ethics has served as the standard for nurses worldwide since it was first adopted in 1953. The Code is regularly reviewed and revised in response to the realities of nursing and healthcare in a changing society. It provides ethical guidance in relation to nurses’ roles, responsibilities, behaviours, decision-making and relationships with patients and people who are receiving nursing care. Used in combination with the laws, regulations and professional standards of countries that govern nurses’ practice, the Code guides nurses in their everyday choices, and supports their refusal to participate in activities that conflict with caring and healing.

Consultation process

This new version of the Code has already undergone a full and robust review by members of the ICN Board as well as an Expert Steering Group. ICN has now opened up the consultation to its members, patient organisations, regulatory bodies, educators, and other nursing and health groups such as Nursing Now and the World Health Organization. The deadline for the submission of comments is 22 November 2020, after which the feedback will be analysed and

presented in a report to the ICN Board for further consideration. The newly revised ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses will be launched in 2021.

The 2012 version of the Code is available [here](#).

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Note to 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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