## CONTENTS

3  A message from the Executive

4  International Year of the Nurse and Nursing Now

4  State of the World’s Nursing 2020  
Investing in education, jobs and leadership

5  Submit Your Stories

5  Perspectives and Contributions of Nurses in the Region of the Americas to Achieve Universal Health and Primary Health Care

5  Nursing Policy Secretariat  
Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

7  Nurse Spotlight

9  Caring in Times of COVID-19 - Town Hall Sessions

10  Dear Health Care Workers

11  Caring For the Care Giver  
Taking Care of You in the Age of COVID-19

12  Thank You
Dear colleagues,

On an annual basis in May, the Province of British Columbia proclaims Nursing Week to recognize Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses, Registered Nurses, and Nurse Practitioners and the impact they make on the health and well being of British Columbians. This aligns with International Nurses Day, celebrated on May 12th (Florence Nightingale’s birthday). The year 2020 also marks the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife as designated by the World Health Assembly to celebrate the work of nurses and midwives, highlighting the challenging conditions they often face, and advocating for increased investments in the nursing and midwifery workforce.

During this year’s nursing week, we find ourselves in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic, one of the most significant challenges facing the nursing profession, the health care system and British Columbians in recent memory. This year’s theme, Nurses: A Voice to Lead - Nursing the World to Health strongly aligns with the leadership and essential contributions demonstrated by all nursing disciplines throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, both in their roles in the health care system and in their local communities throughout British Columbia. We encourage you to read about some of the exemplary nurses in the province in our Nurse Spotlight, whose leadership has been evident during the health care system’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nurses have demonstrated incredible resilience under challenging circumstances. However, the importance of protecting and supporting the mental health and psychological safety of all nurses and health care providers as the pandemic continues to evolve cannot be emphasized enough. As much as we care for the people we serve in our personal and professional lives, it’s important that we also care for ourselves and collectively care for each other. Please read the information prepared by Dr. Lutes and team from the BC Psychological Association to help you manage your stress, build resilience and seek supports as needed during these stressful times.

This pandemic has also presented opportunities to grow and strengthen the nursing profession and the health care system. Nurses are using their pivotal position in the health care system to innovate health care services and improve the quality of health care provided to British Columbians every day.

In closing, we are inspired by all that you do to uplift, care for, and support us as a province, and look forward to continued partnership with all of you as we move forward with the strength of our collective actions in response to the pandemic and beyond.

With our deepest thanks and appreciation,

Natasha & Joanne
The World Health Assembly designated 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, a time to celebrate the work of nurses and the challenges they face. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the vital role of nurses into sharp focus through media attention and public displays of appreciation for nurses…signs in windows, letters of support, and the clanging of pots at 7 pm all signal the importance of nurses to our communities during this unprecedented time in history.

The Nursing Now campaign, a global movement under the auspices of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Council of Nurses (ICN), has also been instrumental in elevating the profile and status of nurses and midwifery. Nursing Now tasks all nurses to consider where we can make a difference – at the unit level, in the community, province, and beyond our borders at national and global levels.

Nursing Now Canada is based on an action plan with a nursing leadership pillar to establish a comprehensive Canadian hub of leadership development; a Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) pillar to establish federal, provincial, and territorial Chief Nursing Officers who are in positions of leadership; and an Indigenous pillar to enable and support the current and future nursing and midwifery workforce to provide culturally safe care across Canada.

There are a number of activities in progress under the Nursing Now umbrella to raise the profile of nursing and midwifery, including the Nightingale Challenge for 2020. The goal is to encourage health employers around the world to provide “leadership and development training for a group of young nurses and midwives during 2020,” to invest in the development of the future nurse leaders.

In B.C., activities are underway that align to the national campaign, including support for the Nightingale Challenge, raising the profile of nurses through media, and championing for chief nursing leadership roles.

Nurses and midwives provide essential health services and are key to achieve health for all.

Globally, 70% of the health and social workforce are women. Many of them are nurses and midwives.

The World Health Organization estimates that the world needs 9 million more nurses and midwives to achieve health for all by 2030.
SUBMIT YOUR STORIES

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) Communications Team invites you to visit the new COVID-19/Year of the Nurse portal where they are bringing together experiences, learning and advice from the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On this special platform, the ICN Communications Team have pulled together stories from the frontlines, virtual events that continue to bring our community together, and resources from ICN, WHO, Jhpiego and many other authors.

This is a global pandemic that requires a global response and the ICN wants you to take part!

- To submit a story from the frontline, click here
- To submit your virtual event, click here
- To submit useful resources or ask any questions, contact williamson@icn.ch

Submissions may be in English, French or Spanish.

Please note that all submissions will be reviewed by ICN prior to posting and may also be edited.

PERSPECTIVES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF NURSES IN THE REGION OF THE AMERICAS TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL HEALTH AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

The Nursing Policy Secretariat contributed to the 2020 Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/WHO/University of Illinois at Chicago College of Nursing (UICCON) publication: Perspectives and Contributions of Nurses in the Region of the Americas to Achieve Universal Health and Primary Health Care as part of a collection of nurses’ stories from all over the Region of the Americas to highlight best nursing practices that advance primary health care (PHC) and universal health.

The stories will help launch the PAHO/WHO-sponsored celebration of 2020 - The Year of the Nurse. Refer to The Role and Scope of Nurses in Primary and Community Care in British Columbia to read more about B.C.’s initiatives to support advancement of universal access to primary care such as implementing team-based primary care; developing a nursing practice education and transition model; and advancing the integration of nurse practitioners into the B.C. healthcare system.

NURSING POLICY SECRETARIAT: RESPONDING TO COVID-19

In recent weeks, the world has been transformed—and the response to the pandemic has in turn been transformative on many levels for nursing and the health care system. The Nursing Policy Secretariat has been working with the Ministry of Health’s Health Emergency Coordination Centre (HECC), other ministries, health authority Chief Nursing Officers, the BC College of Nursing Professionals, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC, and other partners to optimize the nursing role and support nurses to address the new realities of the changing healthcare landscape. The following are just a few of the highlights of the collective response.
Nursing Scope of Practice
• Enabling system processes for RN/RPN/LPNs to test for COVID-19 in a broader screening/testing strategy that was recently introduced.

Health Human Resources
• Enablement of temporary emergency registration for all nursing disciplines by the BC College of Nursing Professionals to address the increased demand for nurses. As of May 7, 2020, 508 nurses have signed up to the temporary emergency registration.
• Adaptation and activation of HealthLinkBC’s Emergency Health Provider Registry (EHPR) to provide a pathway to connect nurses and other health care providers to employment settings.
• Reconfiguration of the pathway for out-of-province HCAs to support hiring of HCAs for the pandemic surge. The BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry was able to transition 73 of 77 HCAs to a centralized approach and 57 HCAs have been registered as of May 7 through the reconfigured pathway.
• Assisted the Ministry of Agriculture to develop self-isolation plans and support health care needs for over 1,000 Temporary Foreign Workers arriving in B.C.
• Collaborating with the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness in exploring partnership strategies to increase the supply of ministry priority professions in the province.

Education
• Development and delivery of an online fast track BCIT education program for RNs and other Health Care Providers focusing on telemetry monitoring, high acuity care, and critical care including mechanical ventilation. To date there have been over 8500 learners in the program with a close to 90% completion rate.
• Work is underway in partnership with the Nursing Policy Secretariat, Ministry of Advanced Educations, Skills and Training, health authorities, the Nursing Education Council of BC, and the Health Education Reference Council to support the continuity and completion of clinical placements to support graduation of nurses and HCAs.

Ministry of Health COVID-19 Response Operations
• NPS staff joined the Ministry’s Health Emergency Coordination Centre (HECC), which acts as a provincial health coordination centre for the BC health system and is activated in the event of multi-region disasters and emergencies. The NPS has contributed to creating clinical guidelines and providing advice on clinical issues and key initiatives, including digital initiatives for the public, such as the Thrive app.
• NPS supported HealthLinkBC in managing the surge for services in responding to the pandemic and maintaining business continuity.

Thank you to all of our partners for your amazing contributions and collaborative efforts to support nursing practice and the response to the COVID-19 emergency.
1. How has your role/ work shifted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the personal and work lives of all British Columbians and has created a new world in how we deliver health care in our province. For every health care professional, COVID-19 has become the top priority, and everyone’s contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference in the fight against this pandemic. In my role as CNS for Stroke Neurology in Fraser Health (FH), my focus on advancing nursing practice and improving health care systems for optimal patient outcomes has not changed but, COVID-19 has shifted the way I work and has presented new opportunities for healthcare system reform. Team meetings have switched from in-person to virtual and teleconference modalities which has proven to be an effective and efficient way of getting to work together. Work priorities and assignments have shifted, and new partnerships have been created. We are seeing new trends in our clinical practice environments, and we are monitoring the impact COVID-19 is having on the stroke patient journey and nursing practice by tracking and analyzing these trends. These are some of the things which have changed, and I am sure there will more adaptations to come.

2. What have you learned about yourself as a nurse or the health care community as a result of this evolving pandemic?

As nurses, we are known adapters who are used to finding innovative solutions to a myriad of complex and unpredictable circumstances but COVID-19 is unprecedented and has challenged us. COVID-19 has provoked an opportunity to find new and alternative ways of delivering care without compromising the tried-and-true, evidence-based protocols known to improve patient outcomes. I have learned to trust our foundational nursing practices and our senior leaders to guide us in the unchartered territory of COVID-19. I have always welcomed change and progress in health care and I am supporting teams to be flexible and adaptable in how we work, to be inquisitive about new trends we are seeing, and that we need to break down silos and be unified in our approach to this pandemic. If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a health care community to fight a pandemic.

3. How do you think COVID-19 will impact nursing/healthcare into the future?

COVID-19 has reiterated the importance of establishing innovative, collaborative partnerships in health care system transformation. We have proved over the last few months that we can come together in our communities of practice and lean on each other to flatten the COVID-19 curve. Some new ways of working during COVID-19 will likely stay, and we should continue to look for new innovations for managing the legacy COVID-19 will leave us. I am seeing our common purpose of public service come to the forefront and bind us together during this pandemic. This is the essence of innovation. The 7:00 pm clanging of pots and pans heard and seen across our province and globally has been uplifting and a much-needed bolster of public confidence for every health care professional, at a time it is most needed. I hope this legacy of COVID-19, the simple act of expressing gratitude to each other, will live on in our communities, and within our partnerships.
1. How has your role/ work shifted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
Like most nurses, I anticipated the start of 2020 – the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife as a time to celebrate all that nurses contribute to care and health of people everywhere. I was caught off guard by COVID-19 and was required to re-set work and home life in ways I had not experienced. As Director of a School of Nursing, a first challenge was working with colleagues across B.C. and Canada to position nursing education as an essential resource, ensuring that students were able to complete their programs with competencies to graduate. This work continues, and I am so proud of the graduates of 2020; they have completed their program and are taking up their new positions in the health system at a most challenging time. I am grateful for the show of support for these new nurses and the renewed call to support their first career transition through mentorship, education and access to essential resources. This is an opportunity for us to work together to implement a Graduate Transition Program for all new nurses as a top priority for ensuring a high-quality nursing workforce, now and into the future.

2. What have you learned about yourself as a nurse or the health care community as a result of this evolving pandemic?
I am grateful for the work that we have done in the province to find new ways of collaborating across different nursing roles and organizations including point of care, government, health authorities, education, union and regulation within the Nursing Education Planning Council. These relationships are serving us well in ensuring progress in nursing education programs and safety in practice. I anticipate this work will become even more essential and stronger as we move through this experience of COVID-19 and into the future.

3. How do you think COVID-19 will impact nursing/ healthcare into the future?
In my view, COVID-19 is a teacher, bringing critical awareness and new opportunities for nurses to lead and speak out for what is needed for safe and high-quality care and public health. I anticipate that nurses will lead the development of new health care delivery models and nursing roles needed in 21st century healthcare as we are called upon to do by the World Health Organization in 2020. Nursing’s Codes of Ethics will ground how we work with technology and telehealth, innovate new models of practice and system and ways of working with communities. I anticipate that our collective voice to lead will amplify in the days and years to come. I look forward to the inspiration and collaboration within and beyond our profession.

Eliza Henshaw
Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH)
Family Nurse Practitioner
tsleil-Waututh Nation Helping House

1. How has your role/ work shifted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
I’ve been working as an NP in primary care for 10 years and it’s fair to say that the way I do my work has changed completely in response to COVID-19. In the weeks before the pandemic was declared, I focused on ensuring that I would be able to provide safe care to my family practice of Indigenous clients by optimizing EMR for primary care using virtual tools. I set up a home office and this has been going well; patients feel safer being assessed from home. I also jumped in to support those with addictions and mental health challenges by providing locum support at several community clinics; using strategies such as risk mitigation within the context of prescribing to ensure safe supply of OAT. When COVID-19 screening was initially offered at the North Vancouver Urgent Primary Care Center I was happy to help with that as well. This team was incredible to work with – very patient centered, and agile as ministry directives related to screening can change.
quickly and need to be implemented immediately. As well, I had the pleasure of supporting the health of migrant workers under quarantine. I met more amazing nurses in this work – from public health, community, and acute care backgrounds. So I guess I would summarize by saying that I’ve been lucky in that I’ve had lots of opportunity to meet some impressive teams and to help out in a variety of ways.

2. What have you learned about yourself as a nurse or the health care community as a result of this evolving pandemic?
I’ve learned how fortunate I am to work with so many caring, conscientious, and hard-working people. I have an amazing leadership team at VCH – they bring out the best in their staff. This includes our regional department head and leads, managers at all the sites, and operational directors. I’ve learned about the importance of this type of leadership in creating safe and productive teams. I’ve learned that the health care community is flexible and capable of evolving quickly and efficiently when needed. It’s amazing what we can accomplish when we are scared.

3. How do you think COVID-19 will impact nursing/healthcare into the future?
One of the most challenging aspects of COVID-19 is the disproportionate impact on those who are already marginalized. This includes those experiencing economic hardship, trauma, family disruption and mental health challenges. The impact of isolation, job loss and school closures will compound these challenges. Nursing professionals, as fierce advocates for low barrier access to health care and other essentials, will have to be creative and flexible in the years ahead in order to make sure there is help for those who need it most.

Members of the Provincial Nursing and Allied Health Council held a virtual town hall on April 24, 2020 to discuss a range of topics including clinical and ethical considerations, managing uncertainty, mental well-being and resiliency, professionalism and staff safety. The session was well attended by nearly 400 nursing and allied health professionals from across the province. To view the session, please visit this link. A second town hall session is being planned for May 29, 2020 at 2pm. Registration is now open on a first come first serve basis.
DEAR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Heart-felt appreciation from elementary school students

We are pleased to be able to share the heart-felt written sentiments of appreciation from grade 7 students at Colleen and Gordie Howe Middle School in Abbotsford. It is our hope that these messages of gratitude help to buoy your spirits, and fully realize the positive impact you have on all British Columbians by your acts of courageous caring. Additionally, the art work seen here was submitted by students at the Edith Cavell Elementary School. These images demonstrate that “Cavell Cares” and they wanted to show their support for all of you.

“Thank you, for caring so much. Sometimes you don’t even get to see your family because you guys are taking care of us 24/7. Thank you for doing your job and making sure everyone is safe and sound.”
Ravneek

“It doesn’t matter if you’re a nurse, doctor, or if you work in a hospital you are still putting your life at risk for us. From the bottom of my heart Thank You!”
Jagleen

“I just wanted to let you know you are doing a great job in this troublesome time.”
James

“Everyone is super glad to have such a healthy community because of all of the health care workers and everyone else that helps to take care of us.”
Parmpreet

“No words could truly express how brave and courageous you all are. People nowadays use the word, “hero” too lightly. Heroes aren’t athletes, or “influencers.” They are people, who are just like us that would put the people around them first. Before themselves. They’re selfless people.”
An Admirer

“You are an inspiration for me and many others…We as kids are contributing by spreading positive messages, writing letters (like this one) and staying hopeful. I feel this is a time where we really need each other’s support and encouragement more than ever.”
Anonymous

“I want to thank all the workers that work hard and risk getting sick to save people. I want to say thank you and always remember that you’re amazing so keep going.”
Jai

We are pleased to be able to share the heart-felt written sentiments of appreciation from grade 7 students at Colleen and Gordie Howe Middle School in Abbotsford. It is our hope that these messages of gratitude help to buoy your spirits, and fully realize the positive impact you have on all British Columbians by your acts of courageous caring. Additionally, the art work seen here was submitted by students at the Edith Cavell Elementary School. These images demonstrate that “Cavell Cares” and they wanted to show their support for all of you.

“Thank you, for caring so much. Sometimes you don’t even get to see your family because you guys are taking care of us 24/7. Thank you for doing your job and making sure everyone is safe and sound.”
Ravneek

“It doesn’t matter if you’re a nurse, doctor, or if you work in a hospital you are still putting your life at risk for us. From the bottom of my heart Thank You!”
Jagleen

“I just wanted to let you know you are doing a great job in this troublesome time.”
James

“Everyone is super glad to have such a healthy community because of all of the health care workers and everyone else that helps to take care of us.”
Parmpreet

“No words could truly express how brave and courageous you all are. People nowadays use the word, “hero” too lightly. Heroes aren’t athletes, or “influencers.” They are people, who are just like us that would put the people around them first. Before themselves. They’re selfless people.”
An Admirer

“You are an inspiration for me and many others…We as kids are contributing by spreading positive messages, writing letters (like this one) and staying hopeful. I feel this is a time where we really need each other’s support and encouragement more than ever.”
Anonymous

“I want to thank all the workers that work hard and risk getting sick to save people. I want to say thank you and always remember that you’re amazing so keep going.”
Jai
CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

Taking Care of You in the Age of COVID-19

Drs. Lesley Lutes, Erika Penner, and Claire Sira, BC Psychological Association

Managing Stress and Anxiety during a Pandemic

Nurses just like you, across the world, are going to work despite the risks involved in a pandemic. Make no mistake about it, what you are doing right now is a brave, altruistic act. However, equally true is that the sacrifices you are making in terms of health and wellness has the potential to be enormous, and many nurses are worried. You are wondering if you will have to make difficult decisions like having to ration resources such as ventilators for sick patients. You wonder what will happen if you get sick, or how you’ll manage if you need to quarantine and be isolated for days on end? These fears are real. Moreover, the impact is real. Initial data coming out of Wuhan China is clear on the impact that being a front-line worker is absolutely having an impact on the health and well-being of healthcare workers. In a survey of over 1257 front-line workers, 60% of the respondents were nurses, and 67% women. What did the survey show? Over 50% reported symptoms of depression, 45% reported symptoms of anxiety, 34% reported symptoms of insomnia, and over 70% of workers reported symptoms of distress. In other words, we need to make sure we are helping you take care of you so that you can continuing taking care of us.

Even though nurses are generally resilient with lots of skills to cope with stress, we all can become overwhelmed by the demands of a pandemic. We know that nurses working with infected patients are at especially high risk for long term mental health concerns. Although it is not nearly enough, we hope that a few tips and some additional resources from a few psychologists may provide you a little support and relief.

Strategies to maintain your well-being

1. Limit Incoming Information. Be discerning on where you get your news and only check a reliable source of information once or twice per day. Think about turning off notifications and give yourself a time limit on social media and the 24-hour news cycle. Take your own vitals. If it is making you anxious, step away. You can come back once you have had a news break.

2. Actively Manage Your Worries. If you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed by the information coming your way, stop and ask yourself what is an established fact? What specific scenario is weighing on your mind and causing you anxiety? Talk to your family about what is troubling you and get their perspectives. Focus on the things you can control (like good personal hygiene and protective personal equipment) rather than the things you cannot control.

3. Self-Care is Even More Important. In a months’ long disaster like the COVID-19 pandemic the stress builds up. Allow your stress-response system to reset twice a day so that your body can keep going for this pandemic marathon. Even if you only spend two minutes on a relaxation activity, it’s two minutes that you were not spending in a state of mounting tension. Identify what gives you energy and helps you relax, whether it could be a physical, social, emotional, mental or spiritual activity.

Try Box Breathing:
- Breathe in through your nose while counting to 4 slowly. Feel the air enter your lungs.
- Hold your breath inside while counting slowly to four. Try not to clamp your mouth or nose shut. Simply avoid inhaling or exhaling for 4 seconds.
- Begin to slowly exhale for 4 seconds.
- Ideally, repeat these steps for 4 minutes, or until calm returns.

This sounds simple, but it works.
Stop. Breathe. Repeat.
THANK YOU

In these unprecedented times when British Columbians are more than ever relying on the province’s health system, your courageous acts of caring and contributions are vital to us all. You, as nurses, have shown great leadership and compassion for your patients and one another in a public health emergency that is evolving daily. Thank you for all you are doing and continue to do. As always, be vigilant in taking care of yourself, your family, our patients, and communities.

With Sincere Gratitude,

The Nursing Policy Secretariat

Caring for the Caregiver

4. Connect with Others. While the need for physical distancing is critical, the need for social connection has also never become so important. The benefits of social relationships on our mental and physical health are enormous and for many people, their normal social routines have been disrupted. Now that we are adjusting to our new normal, it is important to re-establish social connections and figure out how to get the social support you need while also protecting your physical health. Can you go for a physically-distanced walk with a friend? Can you make an effort to call a friend you would normally see? Can you send a text or a GIF to a friend/loved one/colleague to help you have a laugh or moment of connection? Figuring out how to re-establish a routine of social connection is a challenge but is so important.

If you’d like a bit more support, consider making a request for Psychological First Aid from a Registered Psychologist. The BC Psychological Association (BCPA) is currently offering free 30-minute telephone consultations to discuss the stressors nurses face, and to provide strategies to help you cope with being a nurse during the COVID-19 pandemic (without any referral, documentation or linking to your EAP). Moreover, if you think you’d like even more support, BCPA and UBC Okanagan are offering free a virtual walk-in well-being clinic (again, without any referral, fee, documentation, or linking to your EAP). You can self-refer to the virtual clinic by emailing: ipc@ubc.ca.

Lastly, and humbly, thank you for everything you are doing to keep British Columbians Safe and Healthy!
Nursing Policy Secretariat
British Columbia Ministry of Health

For questions regarding the activities of the Nursing Policy Secretariat at the Ministry of Health, please contact: nursingpolicysecretariat@gov.bc.ca