

Celebrating our professions

ON MAY 5 the world will celebrate the International Day of the Midwife and one week later the International Council of Nurses will lead celebrations for International Nurses Day on May 12. The INMO will mark both of these pivotal dates during our ADC which takes place on May 7, 8 and 9.

The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) has determined that the theme for the 2014 International Day of the Midwife should be 'Midwives: changing the world – one family at a time'. This is a very relevant message as, across the globe, midwives, regardless of race, creed, culture or tradition, deliver babies, into this world, every minute of every day. Whether it is a hospitalised model of care or in the mother's home, or indeed any place, it is the midwife who, using her professional knowledge, skill and expertise, provides priceless help and assurance to the mother at a time of great joy but also anxiety.

The International Day of the Midwife celebrates the excellence of midwifery care across the globe and we must use it as a catalyst to ensure midwives are pivotal in shaping all maternity services.

The theme of International Nurses Day 'Nurses: A force for Change – A vital resource for Health' is designed to focus attention on the need for health systems to show greater awareness of the positive role nursing can play in shaping and delivering healthcare. The theme underpins the simple, but vital, message that

an educated nursing workforce alongside a positive, enabling work environment leads to high quality healthcare.

All of this is predicated on the need for governments to understand that equitable access to high quality health services cannot be achieved without an adequate number of appropriately educated, empowered and autonomous nurses. The nurse is, without doubt, the health professional closest to the population they serve.

In providing a 24/7 service, nurses carry a heavy responsibility to improve the health of the society that they serve. This can only be achieved when all nurses combine, through their professional representative organisations, to articulate key policies, initiatives and models of care that reflect the needs of the population. In Ireland, therefore, our focus must be to constantly highlight the positive force for high quality and safe care that results from maintaining the required number of registered nurses in the clinical area. In recent weeks RN4CAST, the Europe-wide survey, reinforced this fact and our task must be to bring that message to government and policy makers.

Between May 5-12 nurses and midwives across the globe will celebrate their respective excellence, their tradition of service to their patients, while uniting to insist that health systems evolve to provide a greater role for their professions. The INMO acknowledges the leadership provided on



these issues by ICM and ICN and we are proud to be the only organisation in Ireland to be a member of these bodies.

Coinciding with the celebration of International Midwives and Nurses Days, the INMO's new Executive Council, following the recent election, will take up office immediately on the closure of our forthcoming ADC. The new Executive Council has a difficult and challenging agenda for the next two years, with a particular focus on campaigns for midwife-to-births and nurse-to-patient ratios to be introduced as quickly as possible. Safe staffing, in all areas, is absolutely paramount at this time and the ADC will focus on this issue.

May I take this opportunity to thank, most sincerely, every member of the out-going Executive Council for their commitment and to wish every success to the in-coming Executive as it takes up office.

Liam Doran,
General Secretary, INMO



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