



## **Council of International Neonatal Nursing (COINN) Position Statement on Neonatal Nursing Education**

### **COINN Position:**

#### **Background**

According to The Lancet Neonatal Survival Series (Joy Lawn, March, 2005) of the 130 million babies born annually globally, about 4 million will die in the first 4 weeks of life—the neonatal period. The majority of these deaths are attributable to preventable conditions such as prematurity, asphyxia, and infections. If these problems are not caught early enough, the babies will require emergency care and may suffer long-term consequences requiring costly treatment and diminish their capacity to work. To recognize, identify, and manage these very tiny, sick infants the nurse must have specialized training and education at a community, unit or institutional level. The movement in other countries to provide this specialized education has contributed to better neonatal outcomes. These include:

- Risk reduction of premature birth by implementing strategies which focus on reducing risk factors which are associated with prematurity
- The provision of emergency care which is likely done by skilled professionals.

For over thirty years countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand have recognized neonatal nursing as a specialty with either training in the neonatal unit or at an academic institution resulting in a neonatal diploma or master's degree. The result in many countries has been recruitment and retention of nurses in the specialty as well as better neonatal outcomes.

Neonatal care should be provided by skilled providers as a first line defense in health care as this is more cost effective than emergency, critical, or long-term care. For instance, direct health care costs for an intensive care or community-based treatment is cheaper than long term treatment cost. This is because if treatment is delayed these babies often require more sophisticated treatment and care which place an additional financial burden on a country.

1. COINN is committed to the promotion of positive health outcomes for neonates (such as decreasing mortality and morbidity) and creating a global community of specialized nurses working together towards this goal.
2. COINN supports the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) especially #4 to reduce the mortality rate of children less than five years of age.
3. COINN recognizes that there are differences in nursing care and education for nurses providing neonatal care. In some countries specialty training is required either through on –the job

training or in a professional educational program that results in specialty credentials or a certificate. COINN advocates for specialized training either at the community, institution, or unit level.

4. COINN believes that nursing and neonatal nurses share the goal of improving health outcomes for neonates and their families. To achieve this goal a well-educated, specialty trained nurse is needed.
5. COINN believes that neonatal nurses should be prepared in programs of sufficient length and scope to facilitate specialized education and clinical practice.
6. COINN believes that specialized, better educated nurses will be able to conduct and collaborate in research that will ultimately lead to better neonatal outcomes on national and global levels.
7. COINN is committed to work with professional national organizations to support the increased training and education of neonatal nurses.
8. COINN encourages neonatal nurses and their supporters to work within the appropriate professional organizations to achieve improved neonatal health outcomes.
9. COINN supports the development of a set of competencies which provide the basis for the outcomes of the education.
10. COINN supports neonatal nurses on an international level to promote this specialized training at country level.

COINN acknowledges that some countries may not be able to implement the recommendations as written due to limited resources-personnel, financial, and equipment. However, to improve health outcomes all the neonatal community must strive to uphold these recommendations. Determinations must be made within local and national organizations as to what constitutes basic, essential, and advanced care.

Approved by COINN Board of Directors

**COINN –THE GLOBAL VOICE OF NEONATAL NURSES**  
**Representing over 50 countries and 15,000.**

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