



International Recruitment of Nurses Position Statement

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Suggested Citation:

Council of International Neonatal Nurses, Inc. (COINN). (2024). International Recruitment of Nurses. Yardley, PA, USA: COINN.

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COINN (Council of International Neonatal Nurses, Inc) acknowledges that limited resources and/or personnel may restrict opportunities to implement the recommendations and action points. However, to improve health outcomes, the global neonatal care community must strive to uphold these recommendations. This position statement is applicable to any healthcare professional caring for the small and sick newborns and their families.

SUMMARY

The Council of International Neonatal Nurses, Inc. (COINN) supports individual neonatal nurses' rights to travel and work in other countries. COINN recognises that countries facing pressing health workforce challenges related to universal health coverage must be supported and provided with safeguards that discourage active and unethical international recruitment of nurses, and that high-income countries must work to grow, sustain, and manage their own neonatal nursing workforce effectively to meet the increasing demand.

BACKGROUND AND FACTORS

Neonatal nursing is a growing speciality but affected by global nursing shortages. Migrant nurses constitute approximately one in eight of all nurses (WHO, 2020). International migration and mobility of health workers is longstanding, but now increasing in volume and growing in its complexity. The factors that drive this are labour market forces such as education, working conditions, and remuneration across countries. Migrant health workers also underpin an effective response to health emergencies. This was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic and is likely to accelerate further over the next decade.

While migration can occur among countries in the same region or context, there is an increasing trend for international recruitment from low and middle income countries. Recruitment to high income countries risks exacerbating shortages in the former. If not adequately managed, international mobility and migration of health workers from countries facing health worker shortages can weaken health systems, worsen health outcomes, and widen inequities (WHO, 2020; WHO, 2023).

Nurses moving permanently or temporarily can experience positive professional work experiences which can aid professional development (Kamau et al., 2022). However, in some

situations migrant nurses have been poorly treated, suffered exploitation and discrimination (Moyce et al., 2016).

The WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel is a key global governance instrument to manage international health worker migration and mobility. Its impact and implications must be kept at the forefront of international agendas to realize the global vision of “building a healthier world together” (WHO, 2020).

COINN RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION POINTS:

1. COINN supports ethical international recruitment from countries as per the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel (WHO, 2024)
2. Nurses have the right to work in a safe working environment and one that adheres to the ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses, or if available the recruiting country’s national nursing code of ethics in addition to the United Nations (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
3. Support individual nurses’ right to travel and work in other countries in a safe environment.
4. An understanding of cultural differences and the need for cultural sensitivity in the new work environment must be considered and addressed to support integration.
5. Support language acquisition to include written, verbal and comprehension.
6. Ensure that adequate orientation and training is provided for a sufficient length of time to ensure competency in neonatal care provision.
7. Strengthen education and training by providing opportunities for continued acquisition of knowledge and competency supported by the recruiting organisation/employer.
8. Ensure that standards of practice are upheld by the employing institution.

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Approved: COINN BOD: May, 2024