

# Investment in Nursing Professionals in the Region of the Americas



There are approximately

# 9

## MILLION

nursing professionals in the Region of the Americas, representing more than 56% of human resources for health.

Nurses are currently playing **leading roles in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic**, and there is an urgent and timely opportunity to translate our **acknowledgement of nurses into organizational and governmental support.**

Invest in:

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) calls for the importance of investing in nursing **education, jobs, practice, and leadership.**



### 01 EDUCATION

- Nursing education across countries are disparate. The lack of teachers with advanced training and the poor distribution of programs at the graduate level present a significant barrier to adequately preparing and expanding the role of nurses.
- Investment in nursing education strengthens the contribution of nurses, assures more equitable access to care, and improves outcomes.
- Transformative, competency-based, and collaborative education programs are fundamental in preparing nurses.
- Ten of the 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have doctoral programs, and over 75% of these courses are in Brazil: there is an urgent need for all countries to scale up post-graduate education in nursing!



### 02 JOBS

- There is a critical shortage of nurses; difficulties persist in supplying new nurses and retaining current professionals.
- Nurse shortages negatively affect health outcomes and hinder the delivery of primary health care.
- Increase salaries and improve working conditions to support the development and retention of nurses.
- Create incentives, including career pathways and opportunities for continuing education to promote professional development and retention of nurses.
- The nursing scope of practice should be reviewed and reorganized to optimize task sharing.



### 03 PRACTICE

- Nurses will be key to accelerating the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and building resilient health systems that are more prepared for future crises.
- Implement a monitoring system that defines and standardizes roles and responsibilities, regulates the scope of practice, and delineates the financial investments made into increasing and retaining the number of nurses working in primary care.



### 04 LEADERSHIP

- Nursing is the least represented health care profession at the highest level in governments and ministries of health in the Region.
- 79% of Member States have Chief Nursing Officer positions yet only 46% have nursing leadership programs.

## Priorities

**1** Aligning education with formal roles and population health needs.

**1** Workforce Planning and Health Labor Market Forecasting.

**1** Strengthening national health workforce data systems.

**1** Establishing and strengthening senior leadership positions for nursing and midwifery workforce governance and management and input into health policy.

**2** Increasing production of qualified nursing graduates to meet growing demand.

**2** Ensuring adequate nursing jobs for primary health care services.

**2** Strengthening professional regulatory systems.

**3** Updating curricula to meet quality standards and focus on primary health care.

**3** Ethically approaching nursing migration.

**3** Supporting capacity building of regulators.

**2** Investing in leadership skills development for nurses.

**4** Faculty qualification, competency-based education, and lifelong learning.