



Western Pacific  
Philippines



# Urgent need for investment in nursing

## COVID-19 pandemic puts need for nurses into sharp relief

7 April 2020 | News release

A global shortage of nurses is highlighted in a report from the World Health Organization (WHO), released on World Health Day, at a time when nursing staff and other health professionals are working around the clock responding to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The WHO report *State of the World's Nursing 2020* projects that, without action, there will be a shortfall of 4.6 million nurses worldwide by 2030. In the Philippines, the projected shortfall of nurses is expected to be 249,843 by 2030, unless greater investment is made now to retain them in the Philippine health sector.

“The case for investing in the nursing workforce has never been clearer,” said Dr Takeshi Kasai, WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific. “Right now, nurses are on the front lines of the COVID-19 fight, working tirelessly to save lives and protect others in their community. Governments across the Western Pacific Region must invest in strengthening their nursing workforce as an essential part of preparedness for health challenges such as emerging infectious diseases, but also the health challenges brought about by climate change, ageing populations and a growing burden of noncommunicable diseases.”

*State of the World's Nursing 2020* paints a picture of complex health labor market challenges. In the Philippines, only 50-60% of nursing graduates become professional nurses who are eligible to practice as nurses in the country.

“The Philippine Government, as well as the private sector will need to address issues on uncoordinated production and inequitable distribution by promoting decent jobs and local opportunities for career development, if they are to retain adequate number of appropriately trained nurses for the needs of the health system,” said Drs. Tauhidul Islam and Socorro Escalante, current acting WHO Representatives for the Philippines.

Investments in quality nursing training and ensuring adequate pay and decent working conditions will help to improve health outcomes, promote gender equality and support economic growth in the Philippines.

For this year’s World Health Day, *State of the World’s Nursing 2020* has been produced by WHO in partnership with the International Council of Nurses and the global Nursing Now campaign, as well as support from governments and other partners. The report provides a global picture of the nursing workforce, using data and standardized indicators from 193 countries and areas including the Philippines.

At the World Health Assembly in May 2019, ministers of health from across the globe designated 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife. It marks 200 years since the birth of Florence Nightingale—the founder of modern nursing, and recognizes the critical contribution these professions make to global health.

A similar report on the midwifery workforce will be launched in 2021.