

Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Development



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World Innovation Summit for Health



POLICY BRIEFING

**NURSING AND
MIDWIFERY
WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT:
FROM GLOBAL
TO NATIONAL**



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANCC	American Nurses Credentialing Center
BNRT	Bachelor of Nursing Regular Track
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
CPD	Continuous professional development
HMC	Hamad Medical Corporation
ICN	International Council of Nurses
ILO	International Labour Organization
MN	Master of Nursing
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
NCDs	Non-communicable diseases
NDS	National Development Strategy
NHS	National Health Strategy
NPHCS	National Primary Health Care Strategy
PDBN	Post Diploma Bachelor in Nursing
PHCC	Primary Health Care Corporation
QCHP	Qatar Council for Healthcare Practitioners
QNV	Qatar National Vision 2030
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UCQ	University of Calgary in Qatar
UHC	Universal health coverage
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WISH	World Innovation Summit for Health

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy briefing provides an overview of the progress in nursing and midwifery workforce development with a main emphasis on Qatar context. It highlights the current evidence about nurses' and midwives' contribution to health and wellbeing; global and national (the term national refers to the local level (State of Qatar) throughout the document) key issues and achievements in terms of education and training, as well as leadership; and collaborative partnerships and initiatives undertaken. It examines further current challenges and gaps and provides policy recommendations in order to achieve better workforce outcomes that in the short and long term can contribute to achieving innovative planning and service delivery to meet the healthcare needs of the population, increase access to healthcare services and support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Nurses and midwives are at the heart of the healthcare systems. They have an essential role to play in the promotion of health and health literacy, prevention and management of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), emergency preparation and response, patient safety, and the delivery of integrated, people-centered care.¹ As the world currently fights the coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the selfless contributions of nurses on the frontline of the global pandemic are countless. They are the largest professional group in most prominent countries and constitute over half of the global healthcare workforce population, representing a central element of primary healthcare and health systems in countries of all levels of socioeconomic development (Crisp et al. *Nursing and midwifery: the key to the rapid and cost-effective expansion of high-quality universal health coverage*. World Innovation Summit for Health, 2018). Thus, the strength, determination, and selflessness of nurses and midwives must be recognised and applauded globally and nationally.

In spite of signs of progress and development, there are key challenges and gaps that impact nursing and midwifery workforce development in the current landscape, while also referring to the challenges across the globe in this area. These challenges include an absence of a fulsome workforce modelling plan; and a lack of a uniformed, coordinated national strategic plan for entry to practice competencies, advanced education and leadership capacity building. Regulatory and organisational issues; a lack of coordinated intersectoral recruitment and retention; and marketing to raise the profile of nursing and midwifery are also challenges that impact workforce development.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Globally, governments are increasingly being faced with the challenge of developing of strong sustainable health workforce that is able to work to full scope to meet the health and service needs. Each country varies in its progress in mitigating these challenges. Therefore, to build a strong health workforce that is able to meet the health needs of the global and national communities in a sustainable way, there is a need for action in the following four broad areas:

- (a) Create a long-term healthcare workforce-planning model to inform population health and service needs.
- (b) Strengthen and increase investment in nurses' and midwives' education, training and capacity building in leadership.
- (c) Enact and ensure that there are effective legislation, regulation, education and employment arrangements in place to advance nursing practice.
- (d) Improve, promote and raise the status and profile of nursing and midwifery in order to enable and enhance nurses' and midwives' contributions and roles in healthcare delivery.

INTRODUCTION

Nurses and midwives play an essential role in delivering health services across a wide range of settings. They are key contributors to national and global targets related to a range of health priorities, such as universal health coverage (UHC), non-communicable diseases (NCDs), emergency preparedness and response, the delivery of integrated, population-centered care and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹ (see fig 1 for more information). As the world currently fights the coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the selfless contributions of nurses on the frontline of the global pandemic are immeasurable. They also play a central role in changing health regulations, promoting strong health in communities and supporting families' workforces and patients.² In fact, population health, universal health coverage, equitable access to healthcare and the SDGs are dependent profoundly on having a highly capable skilled workforce that is of sufficient capacity to meet the population growing health challenges and changing demands.^{2,3}



Available evidence shows that nurses and midwifery are the major professional group in most prominent countries and constitute over half of the global healthcare workforce population. Yet, the world is experiencing a shortage of 18 million health workers, who are needed to achieve the universal health coverage by 2030. Nurses and midwives account for more than half of that shortfall. Such shortage is due to a lack of potential educators, high turnover and inequitable distribution of the workforce.²

Qatar is one of the wealthiest, most multicultural countries in the world, with a rapidly growing population representing over 80 nationalities.⁴ Qatar's total population as of January,

2020 was 2 773 221.⁵ To meet the wide range of health needs of such population, in line with global trends, there is a need for new and additional skills to develop, design and deliver services that are flexible and responsive.⁶

Over the last few years, Qatar has made large strides towards developing a world-class health and educational system, in part due to the ambitious and visionary goals set out in the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV)⁵ and the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2018–2022.⁷ Within the healthcare sector, the National Health Strategy (NHS) 2018–2022 serves to reinforce Qatar's commitment to a highly advanced healthcare system, predicated by three primary goals "achieving better health, better care and better value"⁸ in ways that are sustainable and integrated, and demonstrate shared responsibility. Qatar seeks to develop a world-class integrated system for healthcare that will meet the needs of existing and future generations, be assessable to all residents in Qatar and provide for an increasingly healthy and lengthy life for all citizens.⁵ This vision requires a coordinated effort across sectors.

Much has already been accomplished to achieve an integrated and unique healthcare system since the launch of the first NHS in 2011,⁹ such as the development of national strategies on mental health, diabetes and cancer. Across the country, healthcare services are provided by a mix of public, private and semigovernment providers, with most of the services delivered by public providers that are governed by the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).⁸

In addition, heavy investments into expanding the healthcare service delivery were witnessed over the past few years with additional infrastructure, workforce capacity and capabilities. In 2018, Qatar's health expenditure and investment are among the highest in the Middle East, with over QR 22.7bn (\$6.2bn).¹⁰ Consequently, some organisations have ranked Qatar fifth in the world for healthcare.¹¹ In each healthcare system around the world, there is a need for sufficient numbers of highly skilled, well-trained, high-quality and motivated workforce to meet the needs of their population, maintain a high standard of care and drive forward improvements in an ever-changing environment. Healthcare workers, especially nurses and



Fig 1 | The global goals for sustainable development

midwives, are essential representatives of change, reform and innovation, promoting continuity and improvement in health service delivery; therefore, realising the goals of a world-class healthcare system is not achievable without the appropriately skilled healthcare workers.^{7 9}

Yet, a critical need exists to elevate the global and national discussion about nursing workforce planning and development to ensure that it becomes a well-forecasted and implemented operation, rather than a crisis-driven issue. Without comprehensive workforce planning, training and

education of nurses and midwives, hospital and community settings will not be able to meet the needs of its population and provide the breadth of services to meet the changing healthcare environment demands.

This policy briefing thus focuses on the progress in nursing and midwifery workforce development with a main emphasis on Qatar context in terms of education, training and partnership, as well as existing gaps and challenges, and it provides policy recommendations to foster achievement of better outcomes.

NURSING AND MIDWIFERY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: CURRENT EVIDENCE

Nurses and midwives are at the heart of every health system providing autonomous and collaborative care across the lifespan, in groups and community, and across diverse settings. Nurses and midwives are advocates for quality and safe care for patients and families and play active roles in shaping health policy in patient and health system management.¹²



Nearly 50% of the global health workforce are nurses and midwives with some variations between countries.² On average, countries with relatively low income rates had almost 0.5 nurses and midwives per 1000 population in 2013, while countries that had higher income rates had 6.5 per 1000. In the health workforce, the proportion of nurses and midwives varied from more than 85% to below 25% in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa.² However, there is a continuing global shortage to meet healthcare demand now and in the future. Estimates for 2013 revealed that with the exception of the African and Eastern Mediterranean regions, there is a shortage of 9 million nurses and midwives globally and it will be decreased to 7.6 million by 2030.² Without an accessible and competent health workforce, millions of citizens around the world will not receive services that match their health needs. By the year 2030, there is a need for an additional 9 million nurses and midwives in order to reach SDG 3 on health and wellbeing.¹³ A summary of these numbers is shown in table 1.

Nursing and midwifery remains a highly gendered profession. Compared to 41% in all employment sectors, about 70% of the health workforce globally are women.¹ Noticeably, investing in more nurses and midwives is a great use of money. As concluded by the report of the United Nations High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth, investing in job developments and education, specifically in the health and social sectors, will lead to improved health outcomes, security in global health and expanded economic development.¹

Table 1 | Global estimates of nursing and midwifery in 2013

Numbers	20.7 million; between 0.75 and 1 million are midwives
Distribution	Low-income countries had 0.5 per 1000 population; high-income countries had 6.5
Percentage in workforce	Global average of around 50%; range from below 25% to above 85%
Global shortage	9.3 million now, but 19.2 million more needed by 2030

Source: Adapted from Crisp et al.² (p. 14).

Within the Qatar healthcare system, nurses and midwives signify the largest professional workforce and, as such, play an important role in providing patients and their families with the needed healthcare.⁶ Not unlike the global picture of the shortage of nurses and midwives, the State of Qatar also faces a shortage to meet the growing demands and needs of the current population. In 2019, there were about 22 801 nurses and midwives across governmental, semigovernmental and private sectors, with the majority working in the governmental sector such as Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC).¹⁴

Qatar has 6.6 nurses and midwives per 1000 people in 2016 as compared to 5.8 in 2014.¹⁵ A breakdown of the total numbers of nurses and midwives by scope of practice is illustrated in table 2, with the registered general nurse and midwife as the majority group.

Such workforce is heavily diverse, which reflects the equally diverse patient population group.⁶ Table 3 provides more

Table 2 | Total numbers of nurses and midwives in Qatar by practice

Scope of practice	Number
Assistant nurse/assistant midwife	339
Clinical nurse specialist	57
Midwife and nurse trainee	273
Nurse educator	125
Nurse practitioner	33
Registered general nurse and midwife	21 979
Total	22 801

Source: MoPH data, Qatar Council of Health Professionals 2019. Does not include nursing educators at the University of Calgary in Qatar.¹⁴

Table 3 | Nationality of nurses and midwives in Qatar

Nationality	Number
Philippines	8857
India	8802
Egypt	1026
Jordan	1001
Tunisia	747
Cuba	397
UK	315
Qatar	288
Sudan	217
Lebanon	95
Iran	80
Pakistan	80
*Others	896
Total	22 801

Source: MoPH data, 2019. *Others include Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Djibouti, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Palestine, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, UAE, USA, Uganda, Ukraine, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

detailed information about the nationality of nurses and midwives in Qatar. Nursing and midwifery remains also a highly gendered profession in Qatar, of which 75.3% of the nursing and midwifery workforce are women while 24.7% are men. Nearly half of all the nursing and midwifery executive leadership positions in the governmental sector are held by Qatari nationals.¹⁴

In Qatar, nurses and midwives are highly educated and trained, with over 70% being university graduates. Most of the current nursing and midwifery leaders hold advanced qualifications and degrees in education, such as a Master of Science in Nursing. Advanced academic qualifications are a requirement for senior career progression.^{6 14}

NURSES' AND MIDWIVES' CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Within a multidisciplinary health workforce, nurses and midwives have an essential role to play in the promotion of health and health literacy, prevention and management of NCDs, emergency preparation and response, patient safety and the delivery of integrated people-centered care. Nurses and midwives are exceptionally placed to act as effective practitioners, health coaches, spokespersons and knowledge providers throughout the life course for patients and families if they are equipped with the right knowledge, skills, training, opportunities and financial support.^{1,2}

There is also considerable evidence documenting the contribution of nurses to health and system improvements such as reduction in patient mortality¹⁶; length of stay, hospital-acquired infections¹⁷; and improved chronic disease management.¹⁶ Similarly, midwives have a positive impact on maternal and infant outcomes, including a lower rate of preterm births and low birthweight babies¹⁷ and reduction in complications such as maternal anaemia, infection and preeclampsia and eclampsia.¹⁸



Increasing the contribution of nurses and midwives to health and wellbeing and to the achievement of the UHC and SDGs depends largely on investing in new and innovative services. Recent research has documented that nurses and midwives are playing an important leading role in many new and innovative services like improving access, promotion and prevention, improving quality, and role redesign and technology (fig 2).²



Fig 2 | New and innovative services led by nurses and midwives to improve health and wellbeing. Source: adapted from Crisp et al.² (p. 15)

NURSING AND MIDWIFERY WORKFORCE: NOTABLE GLOBAL AND NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

NURSING AND MIDWIFERY WORKFORCE: GLOBAL INITIATIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with its associates, continues to play a major part in reinforcing the health workforce. The *Global Strategic Directions for Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery 2016–2020*¹⁹ that was built on other strategic documents, such as the *Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health Workforce 2030*,²⁰ the *WHO 2013 Guidelines on Transforming and Scaling up Health Professionals' education and training* and the *State of the World's Midwifery Report*^{19 21} provides a global policy framework and guidance for WHO and its partners to develop, implement and evaluate nursing and midwifery achievements in order to ensure accessible, acceptable and safe nursing and midwifery interventions.

In collaboration with the International Council of Nurses (ICN), WHO launched the Nursing Now Campaign in 2018 that was aimed at maximising nurses' and midwives' contributions to both improve health globally and achieve universal health coverage and health-related SDG target. The Campaign is an important medium to raise the professional status of nursing and signify what more can be accomplished by a well-developed nursing profession.¹³

Additionally, in recognition of the importance of nurses and midwives play in the health and wellbeing of populations across the world, the World Health Assembly (WHA) declared 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, a year to acknowledge globally the notable efforts, achievements and overall impact of nurses and midwives, to focus on the challenging conditions and barriers they face and to advocate for increased financial and resource investments in the nursing and midwifery workforce.¹³ The WHO has also recently published a new report, *The State of the World's Nursing 2020*, which incites an in-depth look at the major component of the health workforce by highlighting the limitations and priorities for future investment in jobs, education and leadership.¹ On 7 April 2020, the WHO once again stressed the urgent need of countries to invest in nurses.¹ Never has there been a greater period of time in healthcare delivery that demonstrates that nurses are at the backbone of any healthcare system. Nurses on a daily basis demonstrate their bravery and commitment as they nurse patients fighting COVID-19, educate patients and families and provide compassionate and evidence-based care.

Globally, several achievements have been made in the area of nursing and midwifery workforce development.^{19 22} Table 4 provides a summary of key global achievements.

NURSING AND MIDWIFERY WORKFORCE: NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

In the last few years, tremendous efforts have taken place in Qatar to develop healthcare professionals, including nursing and midwifery. The following achievements and progress were made in the area of nursing and midwifery development in Qatar.

Leadership and management

To develop and strengthen their work skills and knowledge to improve the wellbeing of the Qatari population, Qatar has invested in nurses and midwives by ensuring that they have access to the necessary education required to allow them to progress in their work within the career framework. Educational opportunities have been enhanced through collaboration with a range of providers to further develop research capacity and promote a positive culture that supports access to evidence-based patient care practice.^{23–25} At the national level, the Qatar Council of Healthcare Practitioners has successfully developed and approved the scope of health practice, registration requirements and competencies for all levels of nursing and midwifery. In addition, the Leadership for Change Programme that was developed in collaboration among the World Health Organization's Office for Eastern Mediterranean, ICN, MoPH, HMC and PHCC in 2013 was provided to Qatari nurse leaders.²⁶ This developed programme is specifically designed to provide the necessary support to nurses and relevant allied healthcare professionals to become strong and effective leaders in their fields to advance the healthcare services in Qatar's health sector.^{23 24} The University of Calgary in Qatar (UCQ) has also actively championed advanced educational development for nursing leaders through the Masters in Nursing leadership stream.



Education and training

A number of achievements have also been realised in the area of education and training. For instance, a midwifery education strategy was developed. Over the past 13 years, UCQ has worked on multiple fronts to impact both the healthcare

Table 4 | An overview of key global achievements in the area of nursing and midwifery development

Area	Achievements
Primary healthcare and people-centered care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHC models led by nurse/midwife have been established in community-based health centres • Maximizing nurses' and midwives' roles by using community health and family nurse models • Through continuous education, the diversity of nurse/midwife roles has been enhanced • Meeting the needs of people with disabilities, chronic conditions and NCDs as well as those requiring palliative care • Capacity building has increased in the areas of emergency/disaster response, infection control, mental health and substance abuse • Implementing effective health promotion practices to address the increasing challenges of ageing populations and NCDs
Workforce policy and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National strategic plans for national nursing and midwifery human resources have been developed and implemented • Establishments of new nursing and midwifery boards and councils to manage regulations and legislation; regulation has been mapped at the country and regional levels • The image of the professions has been improved • Collected and published research-based evidence about nursing and midwifery practice
Education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A universal agreement has been achieved to adopt competence-based training • The trend towards specialist and advanced nursing/midwifery education has increased • More partnerships and collaborations have been formed • Standardized and accredited education programmes at all levels • Reviewed and upgraded education policies and guidelines • Continuous development of leadership skills of nursing and midwifery education and practice
Career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in the upgraded bridging programmes • Advanced practice roles, which offer defined career paths, have been adopted by many nurses and midwives • Increasing investment in the development of leadership skills • Increasing the use of communication technology to disseminate best practices • Increasing the involvement of nurses and midwives in policy and decision making
Workforce management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous reevaluation of employment conditions and job descriptions • International Labour Organization (ILO) resolution C149 has been ratified by many Member States • Development and implementation of performance incentive schemes and initiatives • Implementation of positive practice environments • Data have been collected and published to improve strategic planning and create national workforce profiles for nursing and midwifery
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative partnerships have been created to provide grants and address faculty needs • To enhance faculty development, fellowships have been created • To improve resource capacity and quality, collaborations and partnerships have been formed between educational institutions • An increase in the number of WHO collaborating centres in nursing and midwifery practices and research

Source: Adapted from WHO²² (p. 9).

sectors and higher education in Qatar. As the only provider of formal nursing education, UCQ offers modern programming and pedagogies for the 4-year Bachelor of Nursing Regular Track (BNRT) programme, a Post Diploma Bachelor in Nursing (PDBN) and the Master of Nursing (MN) programme. To date, it has infused nearly 700 world-class nurses into Qatar's hospitals, primary care centres, clinics, schools and community.²⁷

Private and public institutions in Qatar have, over time, developed partnerships with local and international universities and organisations to develop and deliver foundational and specialty training programmes for nurses and midwives. These opportunities allow nurses and midwives to receive internationally accredited specialty certifications and further assure that nurses and midwives in Qatar practice to the highest international standards. These partnerships have delivered enhanced specialty training in the areas of teaching, paediatric and adult oncology, neonatal, paediatric and adult intensive

care, mental health, palliative care, healthcare quality, management and leadership.²⁶

Education and training opportunities have also been provided through locally developed and accredited continuous professional development (CPD) programmes delivered in the State of Qatar. At every level and all major specialties, nursing and midwifery education and training are supported. This is evidenced by the 122 courses that were conducted throughout 2017, which yielded 12 262 continuous professional development (CPD) hours accredited from the Qatar Council for Healthcare Practitioners (QCHP).²⁶ For example, UCQ has actively contributed to the nursing scope of practice and built nursing capacity through implementing internationally recognised evidenced-based workshops for and with health service partners^{27 28} as well as customising continuous professional development (e.g. Knowledge Synthesis and Implementation Science Workshop, Emerging Teachers Certificate for Health Professional, Interprofessional Immunisation Training Programmes) activities with partners.



Collaborative partnerships

Over the past few years, several partnerships took place in the area of nursing and midwifery development in Qatar, such as the partnership among HMC, SIDRA and PHCC in the development of a new undergraduate concept and competency-based curriculum as well as teaching across the undergraduate and graduate programmes. Partnerships also exist among Weill Cornell, Qatar University, UCQ and Sidra, HMC, and PHCC for placements, practice settings and research. In partnership with the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), HMC has established the Nursing Now Initiative in Qatar, which is considered the first one in the region. Nursing Now Qatar is part of a global campaign that aims to improve healthcare by raising the profile and status of nurses worldwide and supporting nurses to lead, learn and build a global movement. A variety of events and educational and training opportunities have occurred as a result of partnership. WISH, in collaboration with HMC, supported a "Nursing Now" leadership-training programme for Qatari and international nurses' leaders.⁶ This programme was supported in part by other healthcare and educational partners.



Development of strategies and initiatives

In Qatar, several strategies and initiatives, from the private, public and semigovernment sectors, were developed to improve and enhance the nursing and midwifery workforce. Main themes across all strategies include an emphasis on the development of a skilled nursing and midwifery workforce, the advancement of nursing practice and a focus on leadership development.^{6 25 29} An overview of strategies and initiatives is summarised below.

HMC NURSING AND MIDWIFERY STRATEGY 2019–2022

The current nursing and midwifery strategy 2019–2022 represents the continuation of a strong and effective framework for the on-going development of skilled, passionate

and qualified nursing and midwifery services. This strategy provides a clear roadmap for HMC to deliver safe, patient-centered care. The overall aim of the strategy is to provide services that centered around people, patients and their families, moving from focusing on treating the symptoms of disease to helping people stay healthy. This strategy focuses on four areas that include practice, workforce, leadership and innovation.⁶

PHCC CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2019–2023

The PHCC corporate strategic plan builds on the success of the National Primary Health Care Strategy (NPHCS) and aligns with the goals of the NHS 2018–2022 and IHI's Triple Aim Framework of Better Health, Better Care and Better Value. In alignment with this framework, PHCC's 2019–2023 plan focuses on six strategic areas: a high-quality, integrated family medicine model of care; preventative health; a highly skilled and motivated workforce; strong partnerships with patients, families and communities; an enhanced primary care system; and collaboration for high-quality care and patient safety. In this integrated model, nurses and midwives play an integral role by providing comprehensive care that meets patients' complex and diverse needs. Aligned with our strategy of sustaining a highly motivated and skilled workforce, PHCC's 2019–2023 plan maximises the capacities and potential of nurses and midwives through education and continuing profession development. To support this, PHCC has established a learning and development strategy to cultivate and sustain excellence in all areas of nursing including practice, education, research, policy making and administration. A nursing and midwife competency framework has also been developed and approved, including a nursing career progression ladder and job descriptions.²⁹

SIDRA MEDICINE STRATEGY

Sidra Medicine's nursing and midwifery strategy, currently under development, is aligned to the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Pathways to Excellence six essential practice standards. These practice standards, shared decision making, leadership, safety, quality, wellbeing and professional development, ensure a supportive, professional environment for nurses and midwives, ultimately impacting the quality of care that is delivered to patients and families. The strategy centres on empowering nurses at all levels to influence the practice environment and drive quality care through a robust shared governance structure.²⁵

PRIVATE HEALTH SECTORS' STRATEGY/INITIATIVES

The nursing and midwifery strategy across the private healthcare sector in Qatar has been steadily evolving over recent years. National initiatives and improved opportunities for further education and training have created opportunities for nurses and midwives to take a lead role in patient safety, quality of care, education and continuous professional development initiatives. Examples include the following:

- Clinical handover and effective multidisciplinary communication
- Competence-based skill development
- Identification of and responding to patient deterioration
- Medication safety

The ability of nursing and midwifery strategies to respond to changing local and global healthcare dynamics has been effectively demonstrated across the private sector during the COVID-19 global pandemic. This includes the following:

- Flexible approach to care
- Dealing with fear, anxiety and the unknown
- Changing knowledge and science
- Frontline/exposure
- Upskilling and multiskilling

UCQ'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2019–2022: OBJECTIVES AND INITIATIVES

The University of Calgary in Qatar (UCQ) aspires to achieve excellence in nursing education and practice. UCQ is committed to providing a top-quality, student-centered environment that develops nursing professionals who will help actualise Qatar's healthcare goals.²⁷ The strategic plan that was launched in 2019 lays a practical roadmap to deliver on this promise while implementing an ambitious future growth plan that will see an enrolment increase of 100%. This will take current enrolment from 520 to more than 800 students by 2023, with a goal past 2024 to graduate 200+ nurses every year (UCQ, 2019 and 2020). From 2019 to 2022, UCQ will focus on five strategic priorities with a number of objectives and initiatives to achieve its vision and mission. These priority areas are as follows²⁸:

Advancing nursing in Qatar: Enhance the scope of nursing practice through academic excellence, workforce development, and engagement and advocacy of nursing and government leaders to support strategies directed

at advancing professional practice and health system performance (e.g. expand interprofessional CPD; engage Qatari nursing and non-Qatari nursing leaders in education; engage partners as Best Practice Spotlight Organisations).

Teaching and learning excellence: Deliver current, innovative and evidence-based programmes to prepare skilled nurses who are conceptual, critical, clinical and system thinkers to meet Qatar's needs (e.g. implement an innovative undergraduate and graduate programme, increase professional development opportunities related to teaching and learning in nursing and education).

Exceptional student-centred experience: Immerse students in a breadth of diverse social, cultural and experiential, and intellectual experiences that inspire and support students to give back to the community and contribute to health and wellness in Qatar (e.g. expand support for existing and new leadership groups and community and international initiatives).

Leading research: Increase the role of nurses and educators in the development and dissemination of new knowledge that will advance health, healthcare and education (e.g. collaborate with partners to develop platforms to disseminate research, engage in collaborative research with MOPH, educational institutions and international partners).

Institutional and operational effectiveness: Advance academic and business processes and tools and systems (e.g. enhance and sustain information technology infrastructure to maximise UCQ operations, integrate risk management into all decisions).

WHAT ARE THE GAPS AND CHALLENGES TO NURSING AND MIDWIFERY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT?

Regardless of signs of progress, healthcare and educational institutions in Qatar and a number of other countries are confronted with a number of challenges/gaps that influence their ability to predict and develop a sustainable health workforce including nurses and midwives. Collective understanding of the following challenges/gaps would support efforts to meet the healthcare workforce and delivery needs of the future globally and nationally.

ABSENCE OF A FULSOME WORKFORCE MODELLING PLAN

- A shortage of nurses and midwives to meet the growing demands and needs of the current population
- Lack of a comprehensive database that includes in-migration of students and out-migration of new graduates, emigration and in-migration from other countries and out-migration of current workforce (exit rates) to assist in informing national workforce priorities
- Lack of a national workforce-planning model and strategy that addresses migration trends affecting retention and attrition rates of nursing and healthcare providers and service delivery
- Absence of a Qatar-wide comprehensive strategy for sponsorship, student stipends/allowances and employment guarantees (part time/fulltime) for all health professional students (e.g. long-term residents)
- Absence of a complete healthcare and education sector Qatarisation plan with incentives to increase participation of Qataris
- Insufficient investment in new and innovative services like improving access, promotion and prevention, improving quality, and role redesign and technology

LACK OF A UNIFORMED, COORDINATED NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ENTRY TO PRACTICE, PRACTICE COMPETENCES, AND ADVANCED EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP CAPACITY BUILDING

- Absence of a national entity workforce training and education
- Absence of a national educational and qualifications framework that establishes credential, educational standards and salary levels

- Lack of continuing education and training programmes to prepare nurses and midwives to work in primary care setting, coupled with inadequate posts for advanced practice primary care nurses and midwives
- Limited clinical placements with advanced practitioners to mentor, coach and preceptor students and build capacity in the nursing workforce
- Limited diversity in modes of course offering (i.e., online local and international) impacting flexibility for new students and the post-licensure workforce to advance their knowledge and skills
- Lack of stable nursing educational budget to both increase the number of nurses and midwives and qualify more advanced practice nurses and midwives to overcome their shortage
- Insufficient investment in the development of nurses' and midwives' leadership skills

REGULATORY AND ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

- Constraints with current licensing processes and regulations regarding part-time employment and diverse educational delivery modes (e.g. online learning) impacting the flexibility of the nursing workforce and advanced education ability to articulate and apply for basic, advanced and specialty roles with a well-defined scope of practice²
- Restricted access and acceptance of alternative reliable and valid licensing exams

LACK OF A COORDINATED INTERSECTORAL RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND MARKETING PLAN TO IMPROVE AND RAISE THE STATUS AND PROFILE OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

- Nurses and midwives are not given due recognition for their skills and roles. The public does not always value the skills and competences nurses and midwives have acquired through education and innovation. They are widely undervalued and perceived as "invisible," "taken for granted" and "low status."²
- Nurses and midwives are underrepresented in leadership positions, decision making and at the highest policy-making tables.

KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the abovementioned challenges and gaps, we recommend that Qatar nursing and healthcare decision and policy leaders adopt the following four-point plan. However, there are numerous writings (reference: use several WISH docs) and forums that speak to the global workforce challenges and some of the actions required to make transformational change in the health workforce. Countries vary both in the actions chosen and the actual implementation of the initiatives. This plan provides directions to achieve better workforce outcomes and health delivery outcomes for patients, families and communities. To empower and expand nurses' roles in healthcare delivery at the national level, it is crucial that government, regulators, healthcare organisations and educators clearly support this plan. The action plan below is detailed and will require the hearts, the minds and the courage of leaders to execute the plan.

1. Create a long-term healthcare workforce-planning model to strengthen capacity to collect, analyse and act on data about the health workforce to inform population health and service needs. Suggested actions include the following:
 - Invest in nurses' and midwives' education, retention, recruitment, etc. and strengthening their roles in promoting health and wellbeing, especially in health promotion, disease prevention, health literacy and early detection.²
 - Support nurses and midwives in their expanded responsibilities, and sufficient infrastructure/resources and technology should be in place.²
 - Address with partners the motivational factors essential to attract and retain competent nurses in order to overcome the shortage of nurses and midwives.
 - Increase investing in new and innovative services like improving access, promotion and prevention, improving quality, role redesign and technology.²
 - Advocate for a comprehensive, long-term incentivisation, scholarship and recruitment and marketing plan for the nursing profession in coordination with the different ministries, business and private entities, and health service providers.
 - Develop a partnership between the ministries and the Qatar National Research Fund to develop a focused area of research in the area of nursing and midwifery workforce development and implementations, and the impact of models of care on patient and system outcomes.
 - Develop and implement a national targeted nursing workforce reform once a national workforce-planning model (needs or population based) is developed.
 - Develop a Qatarisation action plan including a comprehensive recruitment and incentive packages (e.g. competitive salaries, attractive benefits packages, and protected time for study).
 - Create a ministerial Chief Nursing Officer appointment within the Ministry of Public Health to strengthen nursing leadership and maximise the scope of practice across diverse settings.
2. Strengthen and increase investment in nurses' and midwives' education, training and leadership skills.
 - Develop a National Health Workforce Training and Education Plan to improve alignment between changing health system workforce requirements, the higher education and training sector activities, and broader workforce distribution programmes.
 - Collaborate with partners to understand the current workforce and needed educational and training investment, anticipated short-term and long-term workforce goals, and the educational investment and strategies that can support the workforce goals, population health and health service needs.
 - Expand flexible and context-relevant programming to increase access to desired educational programmes and expertise.
 - Educate nurses in the scientific, technological and data science skills they need to drive the measurement of progress across various settings, including acute, community and primary healthcare.
 - Ensure that education and training pathways maximise opportunities for optimising scope of practice and fostering mobility in career pathways.
 - Develop strong leadership and mentorship programmes and career pathways to prepare nurses and midwives for leadership roles that engage them in policy development and participation in key decision-making processes.
3. Enact and ensure that there are effective legislation, regulation, education and employment arrangements in place to advance nursing practice.
 - Modernise professional nursing regulation by harmonising education and practice standards and using systems that can recognise and process nurses' credentials globally and locally.
 - Maximise and strengthen the contribution of nurses and midwives in promoting health and wellbeing and enabling them to work at the top of their license, and lead new and innovative services.
 - Develop supportive legislation and regulation to enable nurses and midwives to take on additional and expanded roles in healthcare delivery.²
 - Develop and improve partnerships among health services, professional associations, government departments, research/educational institutions and communities.²¹
4. Improve, promote and raise the status and profile of nursing and midwifery in order to enable and enhance nurses' and midwives' contributions and roles in healthcare delivery through the following²:
 - Raise awareness in government and society of the importance of nurses and midwives.
 - Measure and profile impact of nurses and midwives on health and wellbeing and healthcare delivery.
 - Actively promote nursing as a fulfilling career for women and men.
 - Engage nurses and midwives fully in leadership, policy making and planning.
 - Empower nurses and midwives to play a leading role in primary care.²

CONCLUSION AND MOVING FORWARD

STRATEGISING FOR THE FUTURE

This policy briefing has provided an overview of the current status of nursing and midwifery workforce development globally and nationally by highlighting nurses' and midwives' countless contributions to healthcare delivery and improving population's health and wellbeing; describing the main challenges and gaps; and key recommendations that can be considered for current workforce development and future planning. Nurses and midwives are the backbone of our healthcare systems. They are key contributors to national and global targets related to a range of health priorities, such as universal health coverage, non-communicable diseases, emergency preparedness and response, the delivery of integrated, population-centered care and the SDGs. As the world currently fights the COVID-19 pandemic, the selfless contributions of nurses on the frontline of the global pandemic are countless. The strength, determination and selflessness of nurses and midwives must be recognised and applauded globally and nationally.

Despite signs of progress, this policy brief has also highlighted key gaps and challenges that will require the heart, will, courage and investment by all parties.

To build a health workforce that is able to meet the health needs of the global and national communities in a sustainable way and maximise the contribution of nursing and midwifery to health system strengthening, there is a need for further action in the following four areas:

1. Create a long-term healthcare workforce-planning model to inform population health and service needs.
2. Strengthen and increase investment in nurses' and midwives' education, training and capacity building in leadership.
3. Enact and ensure that there is effective legislation, regulation, education and employment arrangements in place to advance nursing practice.
4. Improve, promote and raise the status and profile of nursing and midwifery in order to enable and enhance nurses' and midwives' contributions and roles in healthcare delivery.

As stakeholders, we recognise that the work required to address these challenges does not rest on the shoulders of one organisation. The changing healthcare landscape requires new and innovative approaches to workforce planning and development – this requires the collaborative work of healthcare and policy decision makers and educators. Innovations and synergies across ministries, healthcare organisations, industry partners and educational institutions are required for transformational change both globally and nationally. This collective effort and knowledge of all parties will serve as an important catalyst to make the changes envisioned by health ministries.



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