



MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

MEDIA RELEASE

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WORLD HEALTH DAY APRIL 7: CELEBRATING OUR NURSES & MIDWIVES

Nurses and midwives play a critical role in keeping Solomon Islands healthy and make up most of the health workforce. On World Health Day, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services remains committed to strengthening the nursing and midwifery workforce to ensure better health care for all.

In Solomon Islands midwives make up 10.5% of the health workforce, while nurses make up 74%. They play a critical role in health promotion, disease prevention, delivery of primary and community care, and care in emergency settings. Nurses are at the forefront of the country's preparation for and response to, COVID-19.

In this International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, the World Health Organization (WHO) is highlighting the current status of nursing around the world. WHO and its partners will release a report later today, *State of the World's Nursing, 2020* recommending key actions to strengthen of the nursing and midwifery workforce. The report provides a global picture of the nursing workforce, using data and standardized indicators from 193 countries and areas including Solomon Islands.

The report will recommend more investment in quality nursing training and ensuring adequate pay and decent working conditions to improve health outcomes, promote gender equality and support economic growth. "This will be vital if we are to achieve national and global targets related to universal health coverage, maternal and child health, infectious and non-communicable diseases including mental health, emergency preparedness and response, and patient safety," WHO Country Representative Dr Sevil Huseynova says.

Solomon Islands is making good progress in several areas, particularly nursing education.

- Since 2011, the Solomon Islands National University has offered a Bachelor of Nursing degree, specially designed for Pacific contexts. About 150 students graduate from the programme each year.
- In 2018, with the support of WHO, SINU launched a Post Graduate Diploma of Health Leadership and Management course, to foster stronger leadership in the health sector, and improve quality of health services and the health of the Solomon Islands Populations.
- MHMS and its Nursing Division, are preparing for the revision of the nursing council act so that services offered by nurses meet the needs of the local population and Solomon Islands regional and local partnerships in health are stronger.
- Solomon Islands is a part of the Nursing Now campaign – a three-year effort (2018-2020) to improve health globally by raising the status of nursing.
- The country is also participating in the Nightingale Challenge, which requests that every health employer around the world, including in Solomon Islands, provides leadership and development training for a group of their young nurses and midwives during 2020.
- In 2018, the national nursing division revised its internship programme, the Nurses Supervised Practice Program, to include nursing leadership and management, education and research, and regulation and practice as part of improving health service delivery in Solomon Islands.

There has never been a greater need for a strong and capable nursing and midwifery workforce, Permanent Secretary for Health, Mrs Pauline McNeil believes.

“The disease burden in Solomon Islands is increasing and becoming more complex, regarding non-communicable, communicable, emerging and re-emerging diseases. In Solomon Islands, we have a large young population and high rates of maternal mortality. Non-communicable diseases are the leading cause of death. Now, with the threat of COVID-19, our nurses will be at the forefront in the fight against the virus.”

“Today, World Health Day, we pay tribute to our hardworking and dedicated nurses and midwives. We are committed to supporting them by providing high quality nursing education and leadership opportunities that will equip them with the skills they need to drive progress in primary health care, and to modernizing professional nursing regulation and so they may provide services that are appropriate to the needs of our people.”

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For more information contact MHMS Media Officer Dian Maggie Row on email, drow@moh.gov.sb or phone: 25205.

Caption: This World Health Day, April 7, we celebrate the contribution of nurses like Nurse Jessie from the Visale Clinic.

