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Policy Title: ISNCC Cancer Nursing Education Position Statement  
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**Title:** ISNCC Cancer Nursing Education Position Statement

**Premise:**

Nurses are essential to global cancer control efforts. Investing in cancer nursing education is crucial to prepare adequate numbers of nurses to address the growing global burden of non-communicable diseases.

Every nurse requires appropriate basic, generalist and specialty educational preparation in order to be responsive to the needs of people at risk of or affected by cancer and to equip nurses to be skilled points of entry to health care systems.

All nurses have a responsibility to participate in cancer control activities (health promotion, prevention, early detection, treatment, rehabilitation and palliation), irrespective of their practice setting.

Quality lifelong education is essential for the delivery of current, safe and effective care.

Nursing education should also prepare nurses for broad provider and policy roles that fully integrate and utilise nursing within multidisciplinary health teams.

Robust and stable funding for advanced levels of education addresses the need for more nurses to participate in cancer control activities in the following areas: primary health and prevention, specialty, patient and nurse education, nursing research and leadership.

**Background:**

Lack of information and education about cancer is a major barrier to effective cancer control in low and middle income countries, especially for the early detection and treatment of cancers. Individuals, policy makers and health care professionals need to understand that many cancers can be prevented through appropriate behavioural change, that cancer can often be cured, and that effective treatments are available. This can best be achieved by a significant increase in the number of training opportunities for health professionals

Nurses provide services which are integral to reducing the burden of cancer on individuals and communities, through primary, secondary and tertiary prevention efforts.

Nurses across health services are often the first and sometimes the only contact in the health setting, particularly in low income countries.



The critical shortage of skilled personnel is one of the greatest challenges facing the [WWW.ISNCC.ORG](http://WWW.ISNCC.ORG) management of cancer and requires an urgent response for lasting local impact.

Educating and preparing a diverse nursing workforce is a critical priority in the context of international migration, advances in communication technology and a worldwide nursing shortage.

**Position:**

Nursing is responsible for developing its own knowledge base. However ISNCC values learning in the context of multidisciplinary health teams working together in cancer control.

The practice of nursing in cancer control efforts should be evidence-based, flexible and culturally sensitive.

The World Cancer Declaration underpins ISNCC's position on cancer nursing education.

For nurses to be able to take an active role in cancer control activities, they require basic as well as advanced oncology education preparation for their particular scope of practice. Clinical education in both practice and academic settings is an integral component of cancer nursing education.

Locally available education for nurses is strategically preferred and may mitigate the burden of skilled migration of nurses from low and middle income countries.

Nurses who understand cancer and the effects of a cancer diagnosis are well positioned to provide comprehensive care to the entire community.

In addition to individual nurses having a responsibility to seek educational opportunities, employers and institutions have responsibilities for a well prepared workforce.

ISNCC is committed to promoting opportunities for professional learning and values the contributions that all nurses can make in the development of their peers and of cancer nurses into the future.

There are common knowledge and skills in caring for people with cancer, regardless of the practice setting.

In order for nurses to effectively participate in cancer control activities it is essential that new knowledge and technology related to cancer control is integrated into nursing education programs in a timely manner.

Post-graduate education programs provide the foundation for specialty cancer nursing practice.



Development, planning and implementation of educational programs for nurses must include appropriate nursing input and governance processes for independent review or validation and accreditation of those programs. [www.isncc.org](http://www.isncc.org)

Development of a cancer nursing knowledge base requires multidisciplinary partnerships in clinical practice, management, education and research.

Cancer nurse leaders perform an important role in the mentoring of other nurses, empowering them to take a pro-active role in cancer control and advocacy.

**ISNCC recommends:**

Nurses be given opportunities for training in cancer control activities.

Political priority is given to cancer control activities, particularly in low and middle-income countries, with an emphasis on improving the number of training opportunities available for health professionals in different aspects of cancer control.

Continuing educational and professional development opportunities should be available to all nurses, using appropriate means to include nurses working in geographically isolated areas and low or middle-income countries.

Cancer nursing programs are delivered and facilitated by expert cancer nurses with input from nursing academics, other health professionals and consumers of cancer nursing services. Expert cancer nurses can be drawn from research, educational, clinical or management environments to deliver and facilitate programs to develop nurses in a leadership capacity.

Information about global and local cancer prevention and control is taught at undergraduate level and encourages all nurses to act as cancer nurses.

Post-graduate nursing education includes sufficient content on cancer control to equip graduates with the knowledge to act to prevent and detect potential cancers, manage people receiving cancer treatment and to assist in their rehabilitation or care through survivorship or palliation, targeting those cancers that are prevalent in their own countries.

Nursing regulatory and professional bodies negotiate and collaborate with their governments to establish strategies to support the development of cancer nursing education policies, particularly for undergraduate or basic preparation, to address the increasing global burden of cancer.

The sharing of cancer nursing knowledge and skills through participation in global education opportunities for nurses by a variety of adaptable methods (e.g. workplace-based teaching, e-learning, formal classroom teaching, seminars & conferences, publications) that are principles and evidence-based.



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