


# 2020: The Year of the Nurse and Midwife

Debbie Fraser, MN, CNEON(C), RNC-NIC, Editor-in-Chief 

Debbie Fraser, MN, CNEON(C), RNC-NIC, Editor-in-Chief, Athabasca University, 1 University Drive, Athabasca, AB, Canada, T9S 3A3. E-mail: [dfraser@athabascau.ca](mailto:dfraser@athabascau.ca).

Debbie Fraser, MN, CNEON(C), RNC-NIC, is an associate professor and the director of the Nurse Practitioner program in the Faculty of Health Disciplines at Athabasca University. She holds an appointment in the Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, and the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Manitoba. She maintains an active practice in the NICU at St. Boniface General Hospital and is the editor-in-chief of Neonatal Network: The Journal of Neonatal Nursing.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES MAKE UP MORE than 50 percent of the health care workforce in many countries, and play a critical role in delivering primary care for individuals and communities. They also play an important role in health promotion and disease prevention, especially in developing countries. Despite the importance of nurses and midwives in achieving global health, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that, by 2030, an additional nine million nurses and midwives will be needed.<sup>1</sup>

In order to address this burgeoning shortage, and, in honor of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, the WHO has designated 2020 as the “Year of the Nurse and Midwife.” This declaration is an extension of the Nursing Now Campaign, a three-year program (2018–2020) to improve health globally by raising the status of nursing and advancing nursing’s role in transforming health care.<sup>2</sup>

As part of the yearlong celebration, the WHO will release the first ever State of the World’s Nursing report. This report is aimed at addressing how nurses can help achieve the WHO’s Sustainable Development Goals, including Universal Health Coverage. This report will drive the WHO’s policy development for the next three to five years. This report will amass data from member countries about the numbers of nurses in the country as well as how nurses are educated and regulated. It will also report on leadership and gender issues. It is hoped that this report will improve the state of the nursing workforce and drive national investment in nursing and midwifery. The Nursing Now campaign will undertake country-level dissemination and policy dialogue around the State of the World’s Nursing report.

Leading up to the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, the WHO developed four themes

for nursing and midwifery in a document entitled “Global strategic directions for strengthening nursing and midwifery 2016–2020.”<sup>3</sup> The themes center on the following:

- Mobilizing governments to invest in building evidence-based nursing and midwifery workforce development
- Optimizing nursing leadership, governance, and policy development
- Supporting the development of a motivated, educated, and competent workforce
- Strengthening the capacity of nurses and midwives through education, professional development, and collaborative partnerships

In the United States, the American Nurses Association (ANA) will be spearheading activities to address the WHO’s goals for the Year of the Nurse. According to ANA president Ernest Grant PhD, RN, FAAN, there continue to be opportunities to expand the public’s understanding of the value of nurses and to increase government investment in nursing education, practice, and research. Part of the ANA’s work during 2020 will focus on engaging nurses across the country in the yearlong celebration and to celebrate nurses as they “excel, lead, and innovate” regardless of where they practice.<sup>2</sup>

One of the celebratory activities that Nursing Now initiated in June of 2019 is the Nightingale Challenge. This program invites employers to identify 20 nurses and/or midwives under the age of 35 and, during 2020, to provide leadership training for this group that extends beyond clinical work. The overall goal is to see 20,000 nurses and midwives globally benefiting from this program.<sup>4</sup>

Another opportunity for recognition is through the Edge Runner program sponsored by the American Academy of Nursing.<sup>5</sup>

This initiative recognizes nurses who have designed intervention to improve health care and enhance patient satisfaction. Applications for this program are welcome. Information on this program can be found at <https://www.aannet.org/initiatives/edge-runners>.

As part of the global nursing community, neonatal nurses play a key role in the health of our patients, but our work extends beyond to that of families and communities. I would encourage all of you to participate, not only in the celebration of nursing this year, but also in taking up the challenge of furthering nursing's reach both locally and globally. I suggest you begin by nominating nurses from your unit and hospital for the myriad of awards that recognize our accomplishments. The Academy of Neonatal Nursing (ANN) sponsors an annual Excellence in Practice Award (see <https://www.academyonline.org/page/ScholarshipAward>) and welcomes nominations until July 1st of this year. Ask your hospital leadership if they are participating in the Nightingale Challenge. Check out the criteria for Edge Runners—do you know someone deserving of this recognition?

Perhaps this year of celebration and global focus on the work of nursing will spur you to consider volunteering abroad or taking up the cause of nurses struggling to carry out their work in war-torn or developing countries or in your own community. Follow the announcements from the WHO for global initiatives, sign up with ANA for news about ongoing work in the United States, and join ANN at our national meeting, where a special celebration of nursing is in the works.

## REFERENCES

1. World Health Organization. Nursing and midwifery key facts. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/nursing-and-midwifery>. Accessed December 9, 2019.
2. American Nurses Association. ANA enterprise gears up for global 'year of the nurse' in 2020. [https://www.nursingworld.org/news/news-releases/2019-news-releases/ana-enterprise-gears-up-for-global-year-of-the-nurse-in-2020/?utm\\_campaign=221202-Year%20of%20the%20Nurse%20and%20National%20Nurses%20Week&utm\\_source=Nursingworld.org&utm\\_medium=Main%20Splash%20Page&utm\\_term=YON2020&utm\\_content=Press%20Release](https://www.nursingworld.org/news/news-releases/2019-news-releases/ana-enterprise-gears-up-for-global-year-of-the-nurse-in-2020/?utm_campaign=221202-Year%20of%20the%20Nurse%20and%20National%20Nurses%20Week&utm_source=Nursingworld.org&utm_medium=Main%20Splash%20Page&utm_term=YON2020&utm_content=Press%20Release). Accessed December 9, 2019.
3. World Health Organization. Global strategic directions for strengthening nursing and midwifery 2016–2020. <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/global-strategic-directions-for-strengthening-nursing-and-midwifery-2016-2020>. Accessed December 9, 2019.
4. International Council of Nurses. Nightingale challenge inspires the next generation of nurse and midwife leaders during 2020 year of the nurse and the midwife. <https://www.icn.ch/news/nightingale-challenge-inspires-next-generation-nurse-and-midwife-leaders-during-2020-year>. Accessed December 9, 2019.
5. American Academy of Nursing. Edge runners. <https://www.aannet.org/initiatives/edge-runners>. Accessed December 9, 2019.

# YEAR OF THE NURSE 2020

LEAD • INNOVATE • EXCEL

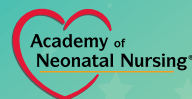
ANA  ENTERPRISE

## Call for Poster and Podium Abstracts

20th ANNiversary National Neonatal Nurses Conference

Fall National Advanced Practice Neonatal Nurses Conference

23rd National Mother Baby Nurses Conference



September 9–12, 2020

[academyofneonatalnursing.org](http://academyofneonatalnursing.org)

Submission Deadline June 15, 2020



Bally's Hotel  
Las Vegas, Nevada