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EFN Response to the web-based consultation on the WHO Independent High-level Commission on NCDs draft Report

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Submitted by Paul De Raeve, EFN Secretary General, on behalf of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN). This document has received input from our advisors and experts within our organisation.

About EFN

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN), is the independent voice of the nursing profession, representing 36 National Nurses Associations and 6 million nurses throughout the European Union and Europe. Its mission is to strengthen the status and practice of the profession of nursing for the benefit of the health of the citizens and the interests of nurses in the EU & Europe.

For more information, visit <http://www.efnweb.eu/>

General Comments

We support the moves by the WHO to establish an Independent High-Level Commission on Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and we welcome the opportunity to provide comment on the Commission's draft report.

We would like to see a clear reference in the report reflecting the current role of nurses effectively managing and preventing NCDs, and the enormous potential to utilise and expand nurses scope of practice to deliver positive results. With the ambitious vision of the NCD strategy incorporating the nursing workforce as a central element of the solution will close the gap between policy and positive action on the ground to achieve results.

We would like a stronger emphasis on the fact that nurses play a crucial role in boosting health promotion and diseases prevention. Namely, their [coaching roles](#) which are key to empowering individuals and families as well as promoting health literacy and changes in health behaviour throughout the life-course of people. Moreover, nurses serve as the interface between acute and [community care](#), focusing on health promotion, prevention, and self-management. As such, they are increasingly taking on the management of NCDs and providing high quality, accessible and cost-effective services.

We are concerned about the fact that the draft report does not include any reference to the work of nurses in preventing and managing NCDs. Therefore, we suggest the following:

- In “**challenges to implementation**” (page 8) add a new bullet point: “*Healthcare professionals, and in particular nurses, are not appropriately involved in the co-design of health policies. Only by co-creating with frontline, it will be possible to create NCD fit-for-purpose policies*”;

- In “**Recommendations**” add:

*“**Recommendation 5:** meaningfully engage the health workforce, and in particular nurses, in the design of health policies. Nurses represent the largest health care professionals’ sector in close relation with patients. Therefore, nurses should be properly engaged in the design of health policies to guarantee fit-for-purpose solutions.”*

Questions for consultation

- 1. Are there issues or strategies that have been overlooked in the Commission’s draft report?**

There is evidence at EU level that the input that nurses have brought to EU policies has contributed to bring a significant impact on the daily life of millions of EU citizens! Hopefully, this contribution will also be acknowledged at a broader international level and included in the WHO report.

- 2. How can your organisation contribute to support the actions proposed in the report?**

The EFN represents 36 National Nurses Associations and 6 million nurses throughout the European Union and Europe. Its work at local, national and EU level has significantly contributed to inform health policies, bringing an impact on the daily life of millions of EU citizens.

- 3. What are the potential barriers/enablers to the success of the draft report?**

To adopt a comprehensive and collaborative approach with health professionals, the report should take into account the role played by the healthcare workforce and in particular by nurses in managing and preventing NCDs. The importance to engage nurses and the healthcare workforce into the design of health policies to guarantee fit-for-purpose solutions cannot be overestimated.

Additional comments

Why it is critical to include the health workforce, particularly nursing in the commission’s report?

Nurses play a crucial role in managing and preventing non-communicable diseases, with evidence showing that, with the right knowledge, skills, opportunities and financial support, nurses are uniquely placed to act as a and effective practitioner, health coach delivering evidenced base healthcare contributing to [preventing NCDs](#), by supporting healthy lifestyle.

Therefore, nurses should be empowered and involved in the WHO strategy to combat NCD. Only with health policies co-designed together with frontline nurses, will it be possible to create NCD fit-for-purpose policies.