




INVESTMENT IN NURSING AND HEALTH SYSTEMS IN LATIN AMERICA

INVERSIÓN EN LA ENFERMERÍA Y LOS SISTEMAS DE SALUD DE
LATINOAMÉRICA

INVESTIMENTO EM ENFERMAGEM E SISTEMAS DE SAÚDE NA
AMÉRICA LATINA

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EDITORIAL

In recent years, health has acquired great importance and has entered a restoration process on the global agenda, due to the SARS-COV2 syndemic-pandemic, as well as the environmental demographic, socioeconomic, and epidemiological changes and government political processes that impact public health and human resources in health.¹

Nursing has been experiencing problems from past periods in terms of its workforce, such as working conditions not meeting adequate standards for organization, precarious work environments, an education that shows weakness in the production and transference of knowledge, and issues in professionalization, market processes, and regulation.²

Studies carried out by international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) show that the nursing staff plays an essential role in achieving health as a fundamental human right and is a critical axis in health services. This is due to their experience and presence at different levels of health care and their access to vulnerable groups as well as remote geographic locations. However, in order to allow full participation in care management, it is necessary to implement a strategic investment process, aimed at training or professionalization in the field of Nursing, improving the quantity and quality of jobs, promoting leadership, and better orienting the provision of services.¹⁻³

There is a significant contrast in the professional development and labor market of the Nursing profession in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is a product of social, political, cultural, and environmental inequalities found in the different countries of this region.⁴

The national and regional groups of both Central America and the Caribbean, as well as those of South America, should have a clearer position in the agendas of the region's governments. What can be found are mostly diverse ideological processes, with great economic deficiencies, as well as a poor vision concerning public and health policies. These political, social, and economic scenarios limit the scope of action of Nursing in the formulation, application, and evaluation of health and Nursing policies.⁴

The knowledge that nurses hold should be transformed, transitioning from teaching guidelines that have different discourses found in classrooms, curricula, and clinical practice, and from the prevalence of an ideology characterized by technical rationality to a teaching-learning process that is critical, humanistic, and includes social, economic, and environmental dimensions. The strengthening of mental health care, the development of innovative models in nursing care both in hospitals and communities, and the approach to primary care and the social determinants of health in various populations would allow the profession to have a real political and social impact, as well as to facilitate the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations (UN) in 2015.⁵

An additional challenge for nurses in Latin America and the Caribbean is their vital role in health systems or services. The competence of these professionals to promote health and prevent diseases, as well as to provide care, is essential at the various levels of health care. Consequently, it is necessary for the governments of this region to improve and/or strengthen health systems or services, as well as the involvement of nurses in management structures at the macro- and meso-levels, and in decision-making aimed at health and care policies.³

More investments would mean having enough nurses to work in health care management and take on leadership roles in decision-making. In turn, this would allow them to influence government policies

and regulations to meet the health needs of diverse populations, in the context of advances in the great technological challenges of communication and information, as well as research.

Therefore, with respect to the role of Nursing organizations: Colleges, Associations, and Unions must reach a strategic consensus regarding the vision of the future for the profession, establish transformational leadership within the discipline and a Nursing governance model, and participate in the implementation of policies related to health and human resources in Nursing. This would make it possible to draw a roadmap to analyze the agreements and results of governments concerning investment in Nursing and the strengthening of health systems or services.

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