Celebrating international year of the NURSE AND MIDWIFE

“A voice to lead- Nursing the world to health”,

The World Health Organization designated 2020 as the year of the nurse, in commemoration of the birth of Florence Nightingale, considered the mother of modern nursing. She laid the foundation of professional nursing with the establishment of a nursing school at St Thomas Hospital in London, which is now part of King’s College London. The year 2020 was wholly dedicated to the celebration of nurses worldwide. Unfortunately, the celebrations could not be carried out in 2020 due to the outbreak of Covid-19. Despite this setback nurses are the ones at the forefront in the battle against Covid-19.

The theme for the International Nurses and Midwives Year is “A Voice to Lead: Nursing the World to Health”. This theme is significant because the nurse is present at the beginning of life and throughout the lifespan of an individual, promoting health and the nurse is present on the last day when a person closes their eyes and departs from mother earth.

To showcase the dedication to duty the Board visited various workplaces and institutions and captured the nurses’ experiences and expectations as a way of acknowledging their work in the health service of Zimbabwe.

I would like to take this opportunity, to appreciate all the nurses and midwives for the invaluable contribution in nursing the nation.

Dr P. L. N. Silviana – HSB Chairman

The ZDF Employ professional nurses who dub themselves as double as professional soldiers. The Military Nurse is also proud to celebrate the International Nurses Year just like any other nurse serving nursing globally. Military nurses provide their services to military personnel and their families in times of peace and war. They also support the general nursing fraternity of the country when duty beckons.

This means that military nursing is very stressful and dangerous as we are called upon to operate in war zones as well. This year’s theme ‘A Voice to Lead: Nursing the world to Health’, demonstrates how nurses are essential to addressing a wide range of health challenges. The work of nurses in the young generation is also enticed to join the nursing service in future. To the nurses in Zimbabwe and the world over, let’s continue to do good to the patients with all of our hearts and let us provide the necessary care irrespective of rewards or external conditions and we should always remember that nursing is a calling to selfless service. Happy International Nurses Year.

Dr T. Mhauyu, Director Nursing Services, ZDF

The ZDF Health Services is made up of the Zimbabwe National Army and the Air Force of Zimbabwe Health Services. The Nursing Department of each service is headed by a Chief Nursing Officer. The Nursing Department consists of professional nurses who are employed on a contract basis in workshops within each service. Nursing in the ZDF is made up of professional nurses, State Traumatologists, Community Nurses as well as Nurse Anaesthetists.

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I started work as a Nurse Aide and then I received PCN training from 2003 to 2006 at Mutare Central Hospital. I appreciate the opportunity to further my education whilst being at work. During my early years of working as a PCN, there was massive shortage of trained health workers especially in rural areas like ours, but we managed to soldier on and we pulled through up to the present day.

I also appreciate the coming in of the Health Workers Protection Act which protected us receive in foreign currency. This is supported by the Global Fund and these allowances have gone long way in cushioning us in inflationary times. I have also received up-skill training in midwifery and I am now a proud midwife as we speak.

On the occasion of the International Nurses Day, I appreciate the skills and knowledge that I have acquired through working for the Ministry of Health and Child Care. Mutare District has done a lot in outreach and sensitisation activities that are carried out to churches that did not believe in outreach and sensitivity activities that are carried out to churches that did not believe in health services delivery system. Nurses and midwives play a very important role in providing essential health services in the world. These are the people who devote their lives to caring for mothers and children, giving lifesaving immunizations and health advice, looking after older people and generally meeting every day essential health needs. They are often, the first and only point of care in their communities.

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The Board and the nurses who are working in the country are happy that they are now visiting clinics and hospitals within each service. Nursing in the ZDF is made up of professional nurses, State Traumatologists, Community Nurses as well as Nurse Anaesthetists.

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The Year of the Nurse and Midwife designation by the WHO highlights the push to increase the global nursing workforce in light of the expansion of nurses’ and midwives’ roles over the years.

Nurses and midwives make up more than half the healthcare workforce worldwide, and the WHO estimates that a shortage of 9 million nurses and midwives would have been recorded by end of 2020. As the world faces growing healthcare challenges, there are ambitions efforts being made to reach a goal of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) around the world by 2030.

The COVID19 pandemic has also increased the burden on healthcare systems posing serious challenges in the delivery of other essential health services. Zimbabwe has not been spared. Nurses have remained committed in ensuring access to these much needed services.

The primary health care approach in Zimbabwe reflects how the health service delivery system is now more dependent on nurses. Nurse led interventions have been proved to be effective and can enhance deployment of resources, improve patient outcomes and promote better health seeking behaviour. Nurses have been in charge of all rural health care centres providing care for communicable and noncommunicable diseases, follow-ups, training of village health workers among others. Nurses are strategically positioned to offer direct care and leadership roles based on their understanding of patient, family, and system priorities. This is despite of the challenges they have faced over the years.

Zimbabwe, like any other country across the world, has also been experiencing staff shortages. The situation was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which required the country to invest more in human resources. The past years have shown nurses in Zimbabwe’s health delivery system.

Nurses and Midwives are our champions. "Nurses and midwives are the backbone of every health system: in 2020 we’re calling on all countries to invest further in nurses and midwives as part of their commitment to health for all."
The Nursing Directorate is one of the critical Directorates in the Ministry of Health and Child Care. The Director is deputised by two deputies, one in charge of services and the other in charge of training. 2020 was designated year of the Nurse and Midwife by the WHO. This is very important as a profession as it is an opportunity for growth of individuals and the profession at large. Nurses are critical in the provision of quality health services and they are supposed to be with patients 24/7. They promote good health, prevent disease, and provide necessary care to patients. Nurses attend to patients 24 hours of the day. This shows the importance of nurses as they provide technical, social and psychological support to alleviate pain and suffering in patients, "she said.

"Nursing is not an easy profession but we joined for the sake of caring for others, so when other people recognise our commitment as nurses, it motivates us to want to achieve more for the health profession," said the Acting Director Nursing Services - ZPCS, Assistant Commissioner Alois Mandizvidza.

The Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services has got 46 established Prisons and at each Prison there is a Clinic. This is inclusive of the 4 major, high volume Complex Prisons which are Chikurubi Maximum, Harare Central, Hwahwa, and Khami Prisons. We have a variety of qualified, professional nurses especially at the high volume prisons. In total we have 364 qualified nurses in the ZPCS. We have nurses of different specializations ranging from mental nurses, psychiatrists, and midwives. Midwives were hired specifically to cater for the sexual reproductive health of female prisoners, so that we are in compliance with the National Health Strategy of the country.

We offer the primary health care package, that consists of consultations and treatment of minor ailments and the prescribing and referral for major ailments. Nurses in the ZPCS form the backbone of the healthcare delivery system and they constitute the majority of the health staff. We continue to grow our nurse establishment to meet new challenges such as the recent emergency of Covid-19.

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