



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General

July 2022

Original: English and French

2022 session

13 July 2022- 18 July 2022

Agenda item 5

ECOSOC High-Level Segment

**Statement submitted by The Fyera Foundation, in
consultative status with the Economic and Social Council***

The Secretary-General has received the following statements, which are being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

Statement

The authors of this statement bring resilience to the global healthcare workforce and offer donated assistance to Member States who wish to address healthcare workforce wellbeing. Write:

destress@heartmath.com

The weight and stress of the COVID19 Pandemic has disproportionately impacted healthcare workers, who were already overwhelmed by compounding stressors from changes in policy, understaffing, electronic medical record integration, increases in workload and untenably long shifts, turnover, unsafety, resource insufficiency. “Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, health workers were experiencing alarming levels of burnout –with up to 54% of nurses and physicians, and up to 60% of medical students and residents, suffering from burnout.” (1) Women are disproportionately impacted: in data from 191 countries in the State of the World's Nursing report, **90 percent** of nurses are women and nurses provide 80 percent of primary health care worldwide.

The pandemic arrived and became a breaking point for the predominantly female healthcare workforce. 1 in 5 frontline healthcare workers have quit since the pandemic began, and it is estimated that by the end of 2022, 1/3 of nurses will have resigned placing even further burdens on those who remain. (2) Fewer clinicians in China (14%) are planning to leave, with much higher proportions in Germany (48%), the UK (47%) and the USA (47%). (3) Neglecting to care for the needs of these predominantly women workers is a direct compromise to SDG 5, gender equity, and needs to be addressed.

It could be encouraging that applications to nursing schools have increased, but due to a 30% resignation rate of nursing school faculty many aspiring applicants who are desperately needed in the workforce are turned away. (4) “*There is a Projected Shortage of More than 3 Million Essential.... Health Workers in the Next Five Years (in the USA alone).*” (5)

The overwhelming stress of the pandemic has impacted healthcare workers internationally and unilaterally, resulting in an even stronger burden on places where there was already suboptimal access to healthcare resources, exemplified by this paper published on challenges to healthcare workers in Bangladesh: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.647315/full>)

10 Years Post SARS Epidemic the NIH reported that Canadian frontline healthcare workers were still experiencing signs of PTSD that were compromising their own health and patient safety. SARS was minimal in scope compared to the pervasive impact of COVID19, in which we are looking at longterm compromises to our global healthcare workforce.

To "Build Back Better" post COVID 19 we need interventions for frontline healthcare workers that:

- 1) Assist them in healing and recovering from trauma, stress, burnout
- 2) Can be ubiquitously accessible to healthcare workers around the world regardless of culture, language, religious beliefs, and gender (ie evidence based, peer reviewed, and respected within the shared language of the healthcare profession)
- 3) Can be done without the barriers of cost, time, stigma, or accessibility that prevent many global healthcare workers from seeking help before it is too late (too late being defined as departure from the profession, or sadly death by suicide. Physicians have jumped to the top of all professions where cause of death is suicide.)

The California branch of the American Nurses Association evaluated 24 mental health support services for nurses and named HeartMath as their #1 choice based on the three criteria above.(6) In attempt to respond to this impending crisis, The President of the United States signed into effect in March of 2022 The Lorna Breene law, named after a woman physician who suicided during the pandemic, to bring non-stigmatizing and accessible mental health interventions to frontline healthcare workers. (7)

We encourage other countries to follow suit, and are available to assist those who wish to do so.

Citations:

1. Surgeon General Advisory HHS USA March 2022
<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2022/05/23/new-surgeon-general-advisory-sounds-alarm-on-health-worker-burnout-and-resignation.html>
2. The Primary Care Collective, and Incredible Health
3. https://www.elsevier.com/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1242490/Clinician-of-the-future-report-online.pdf
4. NPR
5. Surgeon General Advisory HHS USA March 2022
6. <https://www.anacalifornia.org/post/analysis-24-nursing-mental-health-services-and-solutions-2022>
7. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1667>