

**International Council of Nurses  
Rural and Remote Nursing Network  
A Global Connection**

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations (NNAs), representing the more than 13 million nurses worldwide. Founded in 1899, ICN is the world's first and widest reaching international organisation for health professionals. Operated by nurses and leading nurses internationally, ICN works to ensure quality nursing care for all, sound health policies globally, the advancement of nursing knowledge, and the presence worldwide of a respected nursing profession and a competent and satisfied nursing workforce

ICN has provided opportunities for nurses to meet informally at its meetings. However, living in what is becoming an increasingly complex and fast changing world, more immediate ways are needed to communicate and pursue common professional interests. ICN has established Nursing Networks for various groups and specialities within nursing and Rural and Remote Nursing is represented as a network within the ICN configuration.

ICN has chosen a networking mechanism to do this because networks are about:

- getting to know people outside your immediate circle of contacts.
- establishing and using contacts for information, support and other assistance.
- building relationships and most importantly networks.
- communicating.

Networks can go beyond organisational, professional, disciplinary and national boundaries. ICN has identified some activities for its networks. They may:

- identify issues early and monitor how they develop.
- follow trends.
- offer special expertise through creating a resource pool from network members.
- disseminate ICN's and others' work in the area of interest; and organise meetings and conferences.

The International Council of Nurses Rural and Remote Nursing Network – ICN RRNN is an initiative that was actually launched in Canada in 2004 in Sudbury, Ontario at an International Rural Nursing Conference. There was a meeting in Taiwan in June 2005 and objectives and goals were established at that time and co-chairs for the network from the United States and Australia were appointed by ICN. The network struggled to gain momentum but there was a consistent level of enthusiasm from the nurses who attended the meetings.

In May of 2009, a new Core Steering Group (CSG) for the ICN RRNN was convened with co-chairs from Australia and Canada. The Core Steering Group (CSG) has representation from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Indonesia, United Kingdom and United States. The CSG meets regularly via Skype and you can imagine the challenge with time zones!

The first activity was to plan a network meeting for the ICN Quadrennial and on July 2nd 2009 at the ICN congress in Durban, South Africa, members of the Rural and Remote Nursing Network's Core Steering Group met with and listened to hundreds of nurses that expressed concerns related to rural and remote nursing. This meeting provided a wonderful opportunity for nurses across the globe to voice their concerns to the core steering group. The group took notes and spoke briefly about how they hope to make the network more active, increase communication venues, and increase list serve membership. It was sobering to listen to the nurses from Africa talk about their concerns and issues and in many ways the issues that we face in the developed world are very minimal compared to the magnitude of challenges in other parts of the world.

The CSG also established objectives for the network and as an evolving and dynamic resource, the ICN Rural and Remote Nursing Network:

- Provides a global forum for identification and discussion of issues related to rural and remote nursing
- Promotes awareness of rural and remote nursing so that the roles, contributions and expertise of rural and remote nurses are understood, respected and optimized within the health care system
- Assists with the development and sharing of knowledge, tools and guidelines which rural and remote nurses can use to embed specialized skills and competencies into their practice
- Promotes sound rural and remote nursing practice across the globe
- Establishes links between the ICN Rural and Remote Nursing Network and other international organizations, resources and networks to promote the sharing and exchange of knowledge, expertise and experience

The information for the RRNN on the ICN website has been updated and there is now an **online membership form** that can be completed so that you can be added to the list of nurses around the world who belong to the network. You will also be able to receive information from the RRNN as a result of being a member. **There is no charge to belong.** To get to the webpage – go to the ICN website [www.icn.ch](http://www.icn.ch), click on the ICN Networks then go to Rural and Remote Nursing Network and there you are!

The Core Steering Group posts newsletters on the ICN website and there is an opportunity to participate in a Rural Nurses Forum that is part of the website.

The RRNN planned a meeting in Malta in May 2011 at an ICN conference there to once again gather nurses together to provide a venue to talk about their practice – their successes and their concerns. This was another valuable opportunity to share resources and connect with rural nurses from across the globe.

The RRNN will be having another network meeting at the next ICN Quadrennial Conference in Melbourne Australia in 2013. – so there are many activities on the work plan to be accomplished.

For more information about the ICN Rural and Remote Nursing Network contact: Barb Shellian [barb.shellian@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:barb.shellian@albertahealthservices.ca) or Jean Barry [barry@icn.ch](mailto:barry@icn.ch) or go to [www.icn.ch](http://www.icn.ch) .