

EDITORIAL

Dear colleagues,

I thought it would be appropriate to remember and discuss the right to health as the subject of the editorial article of this issue of our journal. For the last two years as we have struggled with the COVID-19 pandemic, renewed consideration of the roles and responsibilities of healthcare professionals and the difficulties they face have come to the forefront. In my opinion, ensuring that there are sufficient resources to provide adequate care, including the quality and quantity of healthcare workers and the conditions of the work environment, is a matter directly related to the right to health of every individual.

The right to health is a basic human right that has long been included in national and international documents designed to protect human rights. It has been described as a fundamental right essential to the exercise of other human rights. However, as we all know, the fact that it is recognized, even in important documents, does not mean that a right is observed in practice. Not only in our country, but all over the world, the requirements of the right to health are not fully fulfilled. Other national economic priorities generally take precedence over vital health issues. The pandemic has revealed the costs of insufficient investment in health systems all over the world.

Health is an individual right and a public good. The right of access to preventive health care and the right to benefit from medical treatment is not merely a reflection of values, but also constitutes a public asset that should be protected. In other words, precautions should be taken before problems occur with appropriate strategic investments. The principles of preventive care apply to individuals and to nations.

While the freedom dimension of the right to health includes the control of one's own health and body and not being subject to interventions such as torture or non-consensual medical and experimental interventions, the rights dimension includes the right to a healthcare system that allows people to benefit equally from the highest attainable standard of health. The most important element of the health system is qualified health professionals.

Healthcare is not something that individuals can manage on their own. It is a duty of the state to provide sufficient services. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the state must ensure that there is an adequate number of trained professionals who can provide high-quality healthcare and to take measures to ensure the continuity of service.

As nurses, one of the most important elements of healthcare services, it is important that we expand and evaluate our advocacy role and be the leading voice in the revitalization of policies. The International Council of Nurses this year announced that the theme of the 2022 International Nurses Day is "Nurses: A Voice to Lead - Invest in Nursing and respect rights to secure global health," emphasizing the need to protect, support, and invest in the nursing profession to strengthen health systems around the world. Nurses are an important balancing factor in ensuring that service users attain their full right to health. However, maintaining this critical role in the healthcare system requires improving working conditions and protecting the personal and professional rights of nurses.

I reiterate the ICN's call to invest in nursing and create a flexible, highly qualified nursing workforce, protect nurses' rights, and transform health systems to meet the health needs of individuals and communities. I would like to conclude my remarks with a small change to the statement of ICN President, Dr. Pamela Cipriano, "Health is a human right that cannot be delivered without nurses, and nurses' rights are human rights."

There can be no health without nurses.

Fahriye Oflaz, RN, PhD., Assoc. Prof.