



PRESS RELEASE

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Commemorating the work of nurses, nationally and internationally

International Nurses' Day 2020 celebrates the work of nurses globally, and also commemorates the life of Florence Nightingale, marking the bicentenary of her birth.

For the first time ever, 2020 has been declared the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife by the World Health Organization. Indeed, 2020 has shown that the work of nurses, nationally and internationally, is key in the fight against COVID-19.

Florence Nightingale, leader and pioneer in nursing, was born in 1820 and died aged 90 in 1910. She is seen as the philosophical founder of modern nursing as well as a female icon, a healthcare visionary, a respected researcher, analyst, innovator, entrepreneur and as a leader.

Her legacy is commemorated annually across the globe. The Gibraltar Health Authority had intended to organise a Commonwealth service to honour her life and to mark the bicentenary of her birth. Regrettably, however, these celebrations have had to be curtailed as a result of COVID-19.

This year, the International Nurses Day takes place in a strange and unfamiliar atmosphere of uncertainty, not only for nurses, but all healthcare workers, who selflessly dedicate themselves to care for people during this pandemic, and some who have sadly even lost their lives to it. The nursing response to COVID-19 has highlighted how nurses are there every step of the way in healthcare, from testing through to critical care, community services, mental health care, Elderly Residential Services and every nursing care pathway in between.

Mrs Sandra Gracia, Director of Nursing and Gibraltar Ambulance Service noted "Florence Nightingale inspired and continues to inspire nurses; her work has informed mathematicians, architects, public health workers and activists. In normal circumstances, this would be a time for mass celebration, however as nursing staff across the world stand shoulder to shoulder in responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic, today we must shine a light on the remarkable work that all health and care staff are doing. COVID-19 has brought home how vital the Nursing Profession is".

For his part, the Minister for Health and Care, the Hon Paul Balban stated; "Today is a special day that allows us all to express gratitude to all those nurses working round the clock to keep our community safe and healthy. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all nurses who, daily, go above and beyond what is expected of them, especially as they work to defeat COVID-19 - Happy International Nurses Day!"

Ministry of Health and Care

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