**Quick facts**

- Over 60% of the health workforce is composed of nursing personnel.
- Over 80% of healthcare services are provided by nurse-midwifery personnel.
- Nearly 20 million nurse-midwifery personnel are needed to provide essential health services.
- More than 5 million of them are in the Americas.

**Why nurses are important**

- They are on the front line of health care.
- They promote health and disease prevention.
- They develop teaching activities in schools, universities, and health services, train health personnel, and promote health education.
- They generate new scientific knowledge that influences clinical nursing practice.
- They manage health services and programs, and provide care to individuals, families, and communities.

**Shortage**

- Nearly 20 million nurse-midwifery personnel are needed to provide essential health services.
- 25% of the health workforce in the Americas is composed of nurse-midwifery personnel.
- 6 of the 10 countries that provided data have fewer than 10 nurses per 10,000 inhabitants.
- 57% of the more than 5 million nurse-midwifery personnel in the Americas are in the USA.

**Uneven distribution**

- Over 40% of the health workforce is composed of nurse-midwifery personnel.
- 60% of the health workforce is composed of nurse-midwifery personnel.
- 20 or less nurses per 10,000 inhabitants.
- 20 to 90 nurses per 10,000 inhabitants.
- 90 or more nurses per 10,000 inhabitants.

**PAHO/WHO’s nursing priority areas**

- Education
- Research
- Policies and strategies
- Communication
- Interprofessional collaboration

Nursing and midwifery personnel have a significant impact on public health. To ensure universal access to health and universal health coverage, countries need to train more nurses and midwives.

**Source:** WHO (2010)