

# Nursing – problems with its position in the health care system

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## Abstract

Nurses, the bulk of health care staff, provide care for people of any age, family, group and community backgrounds, the sick and the healthy coming from different environments. Although recognised as an autonomous medical profession, they do not occupy the right position in the health care system. According to the International Council of Nurses (ICN), nurses can have a significant influence on the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire health care system by performing various tasks and making daily decisions within the framework of executing professional practice. They can also have an important contribution to the process of planning health care, making decisions and the development of effective policy within health care. However, it requires meeting certain conditions, which should include: efficient and well-managed health care system, proper financing system of health services, clearly defined competences of nurses, access to modern methods of care, and also the size of qualified and motivated personnel. This paper presents the problems with the position of nursing in the health care system considering different conditions.

**Key words:** health care system, nursing, nurse

**Słowa kluczowe:** pielęgniarstwo, pielęgniarstwo, system opieki zdrowotnej

## Introduction

Vocational nursing has a relatively short history that started in the second half of the twentieth century [1]. Its beginning is said to be marked by the establishment of the first secular nursing school at the London St. Thomas' Hospital in 1860. The coordinator of the school and author of its programme and learning concept was Florence Nightingale. Only unmarried women were admitted to the school. At the beginning it prepared nurses to care for the sick in the hospital as well as perform simple procedures ordered by the doctor. The model of vocational training introduced by Florence Nightingale became implemented in Europe, the United States and Canada. Vocational training led to the identification of the nursing profession, considered to be doctor's aid [1].

The development of nursing around the world was diverse and closely linked to the socio-economic and

political changes of individual countries, and had a significant impact on the health care and nursing care of their inhabitants. An important moment for the development of the profession was the creation of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) in the United States in 1899.<sup>1</sup>

The changes introduced in nursing education programmes and practices, as well as research done by representatives of this professional group, played a significant role in enhancing its prestige and strengthening its professional position. North American nurses played a leading role in this issue, starting their higher-level education as early as in the 1920s [1].

Nowadays, nurses are the largest group of health care professionals, providing care to people of all ages, both sick and healthy. Despite the fact that under the Act on Nursing and Midwifery Professions of 5 July 1996 and the new Act of 15 July 2011,<sup>2</sup> the nursing profession is