



**NURSING  
COUNCIL  
OF KENYA**



# **POLICY BRIEF**

## **STATUS OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY STAFFING AT HEALTH FACILITIES IN KENYA.**

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**Authors:**

*Anne Mukuna- Ag. CEO/Registrar NCK*

*Kelvin Okile- Senior RSPPD Officer NCK*

*Gladys Omiah- Ag. Director Registration & Licensing NCK*



# KEY ISSUES



1. Nurses and midwives are central to Primary Health Care and are often the first and sometimes the only health professional that people see and the quality of their initial assessment, care and treatment is vital.

2. Staffing levels in the health facilities in Kenya fall short of the recommended staffing norms by the Nursing Council of Kenya



3. Current nurses and midwives' staffing ratios and skill mix in selected healthcare facilities in Kenya

4. Nursing and Midwifery staffing gaps, and the Implication on service delivery



# INTRODUCTION

Nurses and midwives are a central part of the healthcare system, making up the highest proportion of the health professionals. They play a pivotal role in improving health and contributing to the wider economy. Investing in them is imperative to achieve efficient, effective, resilient and sustainable health systems. They not only provide essential care but also play a critical role in shaping health policies and driving primary health care.



Nurses and midwives constitute over 50% of the healthcare workforce globally and provide up to 90% of primary healthcare services in low-income countries. They contribute significantly towards improving patient outcomes and achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably, ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages as well as achieving the “Triple Billions” goals.



World Health Statistics Report indicates that there are approximately 29 million nurses worldwide and 2.2 million midwives globally. WHO estimates a shortage of 4.5 million nurses and 0.31 million midwives by the year 2030, totaling to a shortage of 4.8 million nurses and midwives. The global healthcare landscape faces a growing concern of nurses and midwives' shortage. This is a result of many factors including policy issues, barriers to training, turnover, and factors that lead to burnout (Tamata et al, 2023). The State of the World's Nursing, 2020, postulated that one of the major gaps that needed to be addressed in different countries was nursing and midwifery workforce availability. (WHO, 2020)



# INTRODUCTION...

Kenya continues to face shortage of Nurses and Midwives. Key factors identified to cause the Nurse and midwives shortages include brain drain, poor working environment, natural attrition, rapidly growing population, aging population and emerging diseases.

The emigration of nurses and midwives, and more so the specialized category has a crucial bearing on the quality of care provided in health facilities. This has been a critical concern for healthcare systems globally, regionally and nationally as it has an immediate and long-term effect.(2016).



# TARGET GROUP

This brief targets policy makers key, among them **COG, MoH, Hospital Managers** and **Nurses and Midwives**.

## KEY FINDINGS

1. A majority of the nurses and midwives working in the highest category of county hospital facilities are of the diploma cadre i.e., Kenya Registered Community Health Nurse (KRCHN); representing 63% of the total number of nurses and midwives in the targeted counties.
2. In all the target counties, the bed occupancy in most departments is higher or outstrips or even triples bed capacity
3. The highest average nurse/midwife to patient ratio is in the MCH/FP clinic at 1:40 followed by medical and surgical wards at 1:24.
4. The lowest ratios of nurse/midwife ratio are in the critical care unit at 1:2 followed by renal unit at 1:4 and the labor ward at 1:5 respectively 88% of the respondents identify staff burnout as a significant issue in their hospital facility.
5. Very few specialties currently demanded – 40; BSCN cadre of nurses and midwives is in demand in the surveyed counties same for general, trauma and emergency nurses.
6. Almost 50% of the difficulties in filling vacant position relate to budgetary constraints followed by a lack of goodwill from the county governments to fill the required positions.
7. Emigration (92%) and increased patient volume (92%) are highest contributors to staff shortage; High staff turnover and retirement (88%).

# CONCLUSION

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Develop a comprehensive County Engagement Strategy to enhance compliance of Nursing/Midwifery Standards and promote the HR interests of the nursing and midwifery profession in the County Governments.

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### Editors:

*Annah Njambi Mugo- Corporate Communication Assistant NCK*

*Nicole Choge- Corporate Communication Officer NCK*

# ABOUT US AND OUR CONTACTS

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The CEO/Registrar

Nursing Council of Kenya

 P.O Box 20056-00200, Nairobi, Kenya.

 +254 20 7854665/9

 +254721920567, +254733924669

 [www.nckkenya.com](http://www.nckkenya.com)

 [info@nckkenya.go.ke](mailto:info@nckkenya.go.ke)

 Kabarnet Lane off Ngong Road