

Spotlight on: Ciaran McHugh

NURSING NOW is a worldwide campaign that aims to achieve recognition of nurses' contribution to healthcare, gender equality, wider society and improved economies. The overarching aim of the campaign is to improve health globally by raising the profile and status of nurses worldwide by influencing policymakers and supporting nurses to lead, learn and build a global movement.

Its other aims include:

- Greater investment in nursing
- More nurses in leadership positions
- Increasing nurses' input and impact on healthcare.

The campaign is bringing policy makers the evidence to show that nurses improve health and will make a crucial contribution to realising universal health coverage.

In a new series, WIN will showcase the Nursing Now Campaign and in this issue we put the spotlight on nurse Ciaran McHugh.

Mr McHugh was one of 24 young nurses who were selected by Nursing Now, in partnership with the International Council of Nurses (ICN), to attend the World Health Assembly in Geneva, in May 2019.

Mr McHugh represented the INMO and here he describes his experiences over the last few weeks and shares his ambitions for improving the status of nursing and midwifery in the future.

World Health Assembly

The World Health Assembly is an annual week-long conference where delegations representing every World Health Organization (WHO) country around the world, gather in Geneva to set out the global health agenda for the year ahead. Twenty-four young nurses and midwives were chosen to travel to Geneva, and form part of the ICN delegation attending the assembly.

The role of the ICN delegation was to:

- Represent nurses around the world
- Raise the profile of the nursing and midwifery professions



Nurse Ciaran McHugh with Elizabeth Iro, chief nursing officer at the WHO

- Lobby to improve the conditions for their 20 million colleagues
- Convince key stakeholders to invest in nursing, for without us, Universal Health Coverage cannot be achieved.

The delegation attended meetings and high-level strategic sessions with WHO officials. In addition, they participated in discussions on global health issues at side-events during the assembly.

Mr McHugh describes how he could not, "begin to put words on a page, to describe how I felt when I met some fascinating people from incredible parts of the world on a Friday morning in Geneva."

"The 24 representatives and their new family of mentors spent a life-changing six days together in historical settings, carrying out a job that has been described as revolutionising modern nursing," he said.

Over the week in Geneva, the delegation met with Dr Tedros Adhanom, director general of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Elizabeth Iro, chief nursing officer of the WHO to discuss their experiences. Mr McHugh described how he "couldn't believe" that they were so normal and welcoming.



Nurse Ciaran McHugh with Dr Tedros Adhanom, director-general of the WHO alongside other members of the 24-strong delegation

"They seemed as excited to meet us, as we were to meet them. Nearly every speaker mentioned how fantastic it was to have a group of young nurses present; nurses who are currently at the start of their clinical careers, working on the front-line, delivering the services that were being discussed," he said.

As the week in Geneva drew to a close, Mr McHugh described how he knew, "that this was by no means the end of our journey. Of course, we asked ourselves where we go from here?"

Two weeks after the World Health Assembly, Mr McHugh found himself speaking at the RCSI Hospitals Group Nursing Now launch in Drogheda. He described how he, "felt privileged to be provided the opportunity to present my experiences as one of Nursing Now's young nurses in Geneva."

Mr McHugh believes after his recent experience that, "these are unprecedented times for the profession of nursing, and this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for young aspiring nurse leaders to break the mould and shape the way for modern nursing into the future."