

# COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION



## ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



### COVID-19 IN THE COMMONWEALTH



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation (CNMF) was established in 1973 and accredited to the Commonwealth in 2004. The CNMF is registered in the United Kingdom as a private limited company (Company No: 8781428). The CNMF works with its membership: national nursing and midwifery associations from Commonwealth countries, affiliates, associates and individual members, in order to influence health policy, develop nursing networks, improve nursing standards and competence, and strengthen nursing leadership throughout the Commonwealth.

The CNMF maintains close links with Commonwealth bodies and civil society organisations within the Commonwealth 'family' and liaises with international bodies, such as the International Council of Nurses and the International Confederation of Midwives. These links enable the CNMF to plan strategically on issues of concern to nursing and midwifery in a global context.

Additionally, the CNMF is affiliated with other international bodies such as C3 Collaborating for Health; Health Information for All; and the World Continuing Education Alliance, and liaises with regional bodies such as the Caribbean Nurses Organisation; the South Pacific Nurses Forum; the East, Central and Southern African College of Nursing (ECSACON); and the West African College of Nursing (WACN). The CNMF participates actively in the work of Commonwealth bodies: the Commonwealth Foundation, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the Commonwealth Health Professions and Partners Alliance (CHPA).

The CNMF's work is supported by administrative and collegiate support and advice from the Royal College of Nursing, United Kingdom (RCN UK). The CNMF Executive Officers and Board are extremely grateful to the RCN UK and appreciative of the excellent support they provide and their encouragement for the work of the CNMF.

The strategic directions for the CNMF focus on seven key areas: governance, administration, finance, projects, communication, liaison, and membership. This Annual Report is structured under these headings.

## **2. GOVERNANCE**

The CNMF is governed by an elected Board consisting of a President, Deputy President and an elected Board member from each of the six CNMF Regions (Atlantic; Asia; East, Central and Southern Africa; Europe; the Pacific; and West Africa). The major governance instruments of the CNMF are its Constitution, the Biennial Meeting of Members, and the CNMF Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is supported by an annual work plan which forms the basis for a quarterly report from the Executive Secretary to the CNMF Board.

## 2.1 CNMF Board

The CNMF President and Deputy President are elected by all CNMF members. Board Members are elected by members from their region. Elections are conducted according to the CNMF Constitution. The Term of Office is four years.



The CNMF President, Professor Kathleen McCourt from the United Kingdom, and the CNMF Deputy President, Mrs Rosemarie Josey from the Bahamas, who commenced their first four-year terms in 2018.

CNMF Board members are: **Atlantic:** Mrs Bettyann Murray-John (Trinidad and Tobago); **Asia:** Ms Evelyn Kannan (India); **West Africa:** Mr Adeniji Abdrafui Alani (Nigeria); **East, Central and Southern Africa:** Mr Paul Magesa Mashauri (Tanzania); **Pacific:** Ms Annie Butler (Australia); and **Europe:** Mr Dimitris Loizou (Cyprus).



Bettyann Murray-John; Evelyn Kannan; Adeniji Abdrafui Alani; Paul Magesa; Annie Butler; and Dimitris Loizou



Ms Jill Iliffe has been the appointed CNMF Executive Secretary since April 2008. Mr Brian Christopher has been the CNMF Honorary Treasurer since 1 January 2017.

## 2.2 Other Governance Structures

The CNMF Constitution, which is publicly available on the CNMF website, <https://www.commonwealthnurses.org>, is reviewed each two years prior to the CNMF Biennial Meeting of Members. The Constitution was most recently reviewed at the 24<sup>th</sup> CNMF Biennial Meeting of Members in 2020. The CNMF Strategic Plan is also reviewed each two years and submitted to members at the Biennial Meeting, The CNMF Strategic Plan 2020-2022 is also available on the CNMF website. The CNMF Executive Secretary provides a quarterly report to the CNMF Board addressing the seven CNMF strategic areas. Additionally all the requirements of being a registered company with UK Companies House are met as well as taxation obligations to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs as a company registered in the UK.

### **3. IMPACT OF COVID 19**

Countries across the world were starting to close their borders by the time the 5<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Conference in London concluded, indeed some participants were unable to re-enter their own countries, and others found themselves immediately in quarantine. The 2020 International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife was meant to be a celebration and provide an opportunity for nurses and midwives to showcase the incredible work they have done, are doing, and intend to do in the future. Instead, the global COVID-19 pandemic meant that, instead of the planned year of celebrations, nurses and midwives were needed at the front-line to care for people who had contracted the virus. Nurses and midwives faced high client throughput; shortages of staff, especially when staff had to quarantine; poor infection and prevention and control training; and lack of personal protective equipment. Compounding this was the fear of contracting the infection themselves, or carrying it home to infect their families. The International Council of Nurses (ICN) estimated in early June 2020 that globally around 230,000 health care workers had contracted COVID-19 through their work, with 600 nurses dying from the disease.

2021 was designated the *Year of the Health and Care Worker* by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The Steering Committee on the Year of the Health and Care Worker issued a Joint Statement expressing their deep concern about the number of deaths, the overall low rate of vaccinations, and the vaccine inequity among health and care workers, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. These deaths are a tragic loss, they say, and leave an irreplaceable gap in the world's pandemic response. The WHO estimates that between 80,000 and 180,000 health and care workers could have died from COVID-19 in the period between January 2020 to May 2021.

The response of nurses and midwives to the pandemic clearly demonstrated how dependent health systems are on their presence, their input and their care. The CNMF pays tribute to the many nurses and midwives across the Commonwealth who responded so courageously and selflessly to the needs of their populations.

Despite a vaccine becoming available in December 2020, countries have still not been able to resume normal social and economic activity and borders remain closed with strict restrictions to movement and socialisation. The sudden change in how the world is connected has been hard to comprehend or predict when and if restrictions will be eased. The CNMF however has been able to continue its project work and communication with members using digital technology.

### **4. ADMINISTRATION**

CNMF administrative processes are constantly evaluated for their efficiency and timeliness. Administrative processes, such as those outlined below, have been able to continue during the current pandemic as the CNMF administration is largely digitally constructed.

- Contact details for all CNMF member associations, Chief Nursing Officers and Nursing Registrars are updated annually to ensure reliable and consistent communication.
- The CNMF website is regularly updated.
- The CNMF bank accounts allow online access and electronic transfer of funds and constant monitoring of income and expenditure.
- The CNMF has a comprehensive data base which includes regular contacts as well as subscriptions to the monthly *e-News* and the bi-annual CNMF journal: *The Commonwealth Nurse*.

- The CNMF has eliminated paper files and all files are now stored in an electronic format. Electronic access to files, email, the website, the internet and the CNMF bank account allows seamless and timely administration regardless of geographic location.
- Regular use is made of electronic communication, such as email, Skype, and Zoom to reduce communication costs.
- The CNMF has established an online digital file archive attached to the CNMF website. The archive has the capacity to store all CNMF files from 1973 in an orderly searchable format. The archive is password protected, however is accessible to researchers and students on request. Gradually, existing digital files and digitised paper files are being transferred to the online archive, securing the history of the CNMF for future generations.

## **5. FINANCES**

The CNMF is funded through a combination of membership fees, grants from funding bodies, consultancy fees, donations, and gifts. Grant funding during 2020-2021 was received from International Training and Education Centre for Health, University of Washington and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Accessing ongoing funding is a perennial and time consuming problem. The activities and impact of the CNMF is limited only by access to funding. Considerable savings are generated by the use digital media to maintain contact with members rather than telephone and postage; and by uploading documents to the website rather than printing. Savings are also generated by the opportunistic planning of activities to coincide with other events. The CNMF financial records are independently audited. The 2020-2021 audit forms part of this Annual Report.

## **6. PROJECTS**

The CNMF focus is on in-country, rather than regional, project work. In-country project work allows the CNMF to extend its reach, reduce costs, and achieve a greater impact with a critical in-country mass enhancing effect and outcome. The CNMF also seeks partners from a broader field in addition to traditional Commonwealth sources. There is a focus on supporting national nursing and midwifery associations so they can have a greater impact at government level (leadership, governance, capacity building, media, lobbying) and working with national associations to provide them with evidence to support their lobbying (surveys and research).

### **6.1 Mental Health Legislation Reform Project**

Since 2013, the CNMF has been working with selected Commonwealth countries to reform their mental health legislation. Supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the CNMF has continued to work during the pandemic with a National Mental Health Advisory Committee established by the Government of the Bahamas to write new mental health legislation for the Bahamas. During the reporting period, eighteen online meetings held, culminating in a draft Mental Health Bill and preparations for extensive stakeholder consultations in the latter half of 2021. It is envisaged the stakeholder meetings will also be held online.

### **6.2 Scopes of Practice and Standards of Practice Project Cambodia**

Cambodia is not a Commonwealth country, however as the CNMF had worked closely with the International Training and Education Centre for Health, University of Washington on a number of projects in Africa (Tanzania, Malawi, South Africa and Botswana), the CNMF Board approved the project. The initial focus of the Cambodia project, which began in August 2019, was to develop standards of practice and a scope of practice for midwives.

These documents were successfully developed and the project was extended to develop a scope of practice and standards of practice for nurses. The CNMF held regular online meetings with the Cambodia Council of Nurses (CCN) and a technical working group established by the CCN. A decision was made to focus on writing a Scop of Practice and a validation workshop for the Scope of Practice was held in January 2021. Despite some local opposition, work began on revising the 2015 Nursing Standards. This work is still in progress. The project was further extended to include the Dental Council of Cambodia and the Pharmacy Council of Cambodia. Initial online meetings were held in June 2021 for work to commence toward the end of 2021 with the establishment of two technical working groups.

## 7. COMMUNICATION

### 7.1 Website

The CNMF website provides an interactive environment in which to publicise and report on CNMF activities. The website is an essential and integral component of the CNMF communication strategy. This has been more important with the inability for face to face communication due to the pandemic. The website is managed in-house to reduce operating costs. The website contains a secure site for the CNMF Board and Appointed Officers. A searchable digital archive has been attached to the CNMF website to provide permanent and secure storage for all CNMF files. Old paper files are gradually being scanned, digitised, and added to the archive to secure the CNMF history for the future. The archive is password protected however is available to researchers and students on request.



<http://www.commonwealthnurses.org>

### 7.2 CNMF e-News

The CNMF produces a monthly e-News bulletin to keep members and other relevant organisations and interested stakeholders informed of CNMF activities, and bring to them up to date information about other relevant global issues and events. The e-News has a wide circulation and is extremely popular. A subscription form is available on the CNMF website (subscriptions are free). CNMF members and friends are encouraged to distribute the e-News within their own networks. The e-News has been a valuable source of information about the progress of the pandemic across the Commonwealth as well as key information from the World Health Organisation, particularly in relation to infection prevention and control and the use of personal protective equipment.

**COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION**  
 8-NEWS Vol. 11 Issue 7 July 2020

**24/07/2020**  
Total: 5,072,090

**GENERAL READER FOR US AND CANADA AND COVID-19**  
 The graph above shows the number of deaths globally as a result of COVID-19 from 1 January to 24 July. It is an alarming graph which can be viewed at: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

**GENERAL READER FOR US AND CANADA AND COVID-19**  
 COVID-19 is set to become the largest cause of death globally in 2020. Research which suggests that the most people infected are men living in isolated areas of villages, despite evidence to the contrary that men will not be as much affected as women and that they are less likely to be infected and more likely to die.

**GENERAL READER FOR US AND CANADA AND COVID-19**  
 Research also indicates that developing, low- to middle-income countries are more likely to experience high and rapid mortality rates, and more pronounced gender inequalities.

**GENERAL READER FOR US AND CANADA AND COVID-19**  
 The WHO has outlined a clear and concise path to a safe, effective, and equitable global solution to the COVID-19 outbreak. It is a 10-point plan that includes:

- Work to meet people with information.
- Improve the air quality.
- Stay through an outbreak.
- Minimising and ending an outbreak.
- Preventing outbreaks from spreading.

**GENERAL READER FOR US AND CANADA AND COVID-19**  
 The Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation is a key partner in the search for a COVID-19 solution as a community of professionals, leaders and a community of practice.

**COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION**  
 8-NEWS Vol. 11 Issue 8 September 2020

**WHO GUIDANCE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND MASKS FOR CHILDREN**

**COVID-19 AND THE SAFETY OF THE HEALTH WORKFORCE**

**CHILDREN AND MASKS**

The WHO has published general guidance on how to maintain mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak, as health-care workers face an unprecedented pace of change in public health. The report of the WHO on masks and child safety is being widely shared in their own countries. Available in English, Chinese, and Arabic, WHO's guidance includes recommendations on how to maintain mental health and safety of health-care workers and children in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak. The WHO guidance also includes a list of other countries in the world that are currently providing guidance on masks and child safety. The WHO guidance also includes a list of other countries in the world that are currently providing guidance on masks and child safety.

The WHO has released a list of 100 health-care workers who have died from COVID-19. The list includes names of health-care workers from various countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines. The WHO has also released a list of 100 health-care workers who have died from COVID-19. The list includes names of health-care workers from various countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines.

**COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION**  
 8-NEWS Vol. 11 Issue 10 October 2020

**SEYCHELLES PASSES NEW MENTAL HEALTH LEGISLATION**

The Seychelles has passed new mental health legislation. The new legislation is expected to improve the mental health of the population. The new legislation is expected to improve the mental health of the population. The new legislation is expected to improve the mental health of the population.

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### 7.3 CNMF Journal: *The Commonwealth Nurse*

The CNMF journal, *The Commonwealth Nurse*, is produced twice yearly and provided free to members. The journal is produced in-house to reduce costs. Apart from providing an overview of CNMF activities, *The Commonwealth Nurse* provides information and also publishes articles submitted by members. *The Commonwealth Nurse* is an open access journal, freely available from its own website: <http://www.thecommonwealthnurse.com>. The journal is no longer produced in print form. The journal can be downloaded in its entirety or by individual article.



## 7.4 Social Media

The CNMF has a presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram and regularly posts to those media.



## 8. LIAISON

### 8.1 The Commonwealth Health Professions and Partners Alliance (CHPA)



The CHPA is an alliance of Commonwealth accredited health professional associations. By working together, members of the CHPA can more efficiently and effectively represent and support health professionals in Commonwealth countries and promote high standards of care and equity in access to care for Commonwealth peoples.

### 8.2 Commonwealth Civil Society Policy Forum

The Commonwealth Health Professions and Partners Alliance (CHPA), hosted the 2021 Commonwealth Civil Society Forum (CCSPF) on 18 May, which was organised by the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association. Due to the continuing restrictions from COVID-19, the CCSPF was conducted online as it had been in 2020.



The title of the Forum was: *Equitable and appropriate access to quality medicines and vaccines in the Commonwealth: innovative approaches and lessons learned from COVID-19*. The topic for the CCSPF was in response to concerns about access to medicines for some countries during COVID-19, and particularly the very unequal access to COVID-19 vaccinations. The objectives for the CCSPF were:



- To raise awareness of the need for equitable access to quality medicines and vaccines.
- To share best practice and innovations across the Commonwealth in ensuring equitable access to quality medicines and vaccines.
- To provide an opportunity for information sharing and discussion on the journey to equitable access to quality medicines and vaccines.
- To propose actionable recommendations for Commonwealth Health Ministers on innovative strategies to increase access to quality medicines and vaccines across the Commonwealth.

Speakers addressed the theme and five recommendations were generated which were presented to the 2021 annual Commonwealth Health Ministers' meeting. The recommendations covered adopting a whole of health system approach to access to medicines and vaccines; price transparency; encouraging and supporting local manufacturers and medicine suppliers; vaccines equity; and sharing knowledge and capacity building. A report of the CCSPF, including key actions for Commonwealth Health Ministers is available on the CHPA website: <http://www.chpa.co>.

### 8.3 Commonwealth Liaison

The CNMF maintains close relationships with the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The CNMF is a Commonwealth accredited civil society organisation. The Commonwealth Secretariat has developed a process of annual reporting for Commonwealth accredited civil society organisations. The CNMF meets all annual reporting requirements. The CNMF endeavours to be represented at all relevant meetings of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

### 8.4 Regional Liaison

All CNMF Board Members participate in regional activities on behalf of the CNMF. The CNMF Europe Region holds a biennial nursing and midwifery conference; the Caribbean Nurses Organisation also holds a biennial conference in the CNMF Atlantic Region; the East, Central and Southern Africa College of Nursing (ECSACON) holds a triennial scientific conference in the CNMF ECSA Region; the West Africa College of Nursing (WACN) holds a biennial conference in the CNMF West Africa Region; and the South Pacific Nurses Forum holds a biennial conference in the CNMF Pacific Region. These regional activities provide an opportunity for CNMF Regional Board Members to interact with members in the region and share CNMF activities.

### 8.5 International Liaison

The CNMF has a positive relationship with the International Council of Nurses and the International Confederation of Midwives. The CNMF participates in celebrations for International Day of the Midwife 7 May and International Nurses Day 12 May. The CNMF is also a member of Health for All.



## **9. MEMBERSHIP**

The CNMF actively pursues membership however this has been difficult during 2020-2021 because of COVID-19 and the necessary focus of nurses, midwives and nursing and midwifery associations on their own domestic concerns with the pandemic. The CNMF has waived membership fees for quite a large number of members over the 2020-2021 financial year. This has had an impact on gross income for the CNMF, as has the lack of opportunities to put in funding proposals for new projects or do in-country work.

## **10. CHALLENGES AND FORWARD PLANS**

### **10.1 COVID-19**

COVID-19 continues to present a challenge across the Commonwealth. There have been major changes in the way we go about our daily lives: social isolation with limits on the number of people who can meet together at any one time; keeping your distance from others in public places; closures of borders both within countries and with other countries; limits on how far you can travel from your own home; unable to visit with family and friends; working from home where possible – except for essential workers such as nurses and midwives; closure of schools and recreational facilities; regular testing for the COVID-19 virus; vaccinations, when you can obtain them; interruptions to the transport and delivery of food and other essentials; misinformation about the virus and conspiracy theories; fear of contracting the virus; concerns about the lack of equity between countries access to personal protective equipment and vaccines; and uncertainty about when life will return to 'normal', if ever.

The CNMF has been fortunate that the projects we were conducting could continue to be progressed online. However there are foreshadowed difficulties with not being able to put in funding proposals for future work and a reduction in membership income with many countries seeking fee waivers as nursing and midwifery associations focus their resources on supporting their own nurses and midwives.

### **10.2 Forward plans**

CNMF project work during the remainder of 2021 and the first half of 2022 will be very dependent on the global situation with COVID-19 and the possibility and safety of international travel. The 25<sup>th</sup> Biennial Meeting of Members is due to be held in 2022 as well as the 6<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Conference. The CNMF will continue to meet CNMF objectives and support our members as best we can in whatever the circumstances are at the time. In a time of uncertainty, the President, Deputy President, and CNMF Board members would like to formally thank all CNMF members who are so diligent in providing input and direction to the work of the CNMF and to all the many friends of CNMF for their contribution toward making the CNMF a successful and dynamic organisation. To all nurses and midwives, the CNMF says thank you for the wonderful way in each country you have responded to the needs of your population and urges you to take care.



Jill ILIFFE  
Executive Secretary  
Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation

# COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION

## RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

	2021	2020
<b>Receipts</b>		
Consultancy income (Cambodia project)	11,534	36,450
Other travel and accommodation reimbursement	21	0
Miscellaneous reimbursement	22,661	262
Commonwealth Civil Society Policy Forum	0	0
Member subscriptions	0	4735
Member activities reimbursement (Bahamas project)	250	423
Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Conference	978	110,194
Burdett Trust Grant	100	0
African Regulatory Collaborative	0	196
	<b>50,524</b>	
<b>Payments</b>		
Consultancy Fee	24,405	52,431
Office services - stationery, printing, postage, telephone etc	367	351
Office attendance (travel, accommodation)	0	748
Officer travel and accommodation	0	1,738
Treasurer's Honorarium	1,481	1,441
Capital equipment and Infrastructure	0	108
Publications	261	98
Website	1,077	1,378
Products	0	1,291
Auditor's fee	1,017	1,017
Bank fees	285	340
Corporation Tax	0	0
Net Adjustment/Currency exchange (gain)/loss on AU\$	902	3,681
Miscellaneous	28	0
Meetings - Board travel and accommodation	128	11,046
Company Registration	13	13
CHPA	98	478
Subscriptions	167	167
Commonwealth Civil Society Forum	1,221	790
Member activities (for or by members)	0	2,393
Bahamas Mental Health Legislation project	5334	6,680
Cambodia Nursing and Midwifery Standards and Scope of Practice project	0	3,298
Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Conference	10,000	72805
African Regulatory Collaborative	0	136
	<b>46,882</b>	<b>162,428</b>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	3,642	(10,168)
Surplus b/fwd at 01 July 2018	4798	14,966
Surplus c/fwd at 30 June 2019	<b>8,440</b>	<b>4,798</b>
<b>Surplus represented by:</b>		
Bank balance	8,440	4,798
Cash in hand	0	0
Add debtors and prepayments	0	0
	<b>8,440</b>	<b>4,798</b>
Less creditors and accrued liabilities	0	0
	<b>8,440</b>	<b>4,798</b>



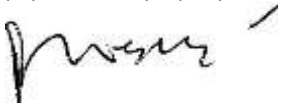
Honorary Treasurer



Executive Secretary

### AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have audited the Receipts and Payments Account of the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation (CNMF) with the books and vouchers of the CNMF, and have obtained all the necessary information and explanations. In my opinion the receipts and payments are properly drawn up so as to exhibit a true and fair view of the affairs of the CNMF for the year ended 30 June 2021.



Peter Westley BA, FCCA Chartered Certified Accountant 16 November 2021



Commonwealth Nurses  
and Midwives Federation

[www.commonwealthnurses.org](http://www.commonwealthnurses.org)