

from the PRESIDENT



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In this edition of *The Commonwealth Nurse* we feature a report about the African Health Professions Regional Collaborative: a partnership between the CDC Atlanta; Emory University; the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community; and the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation.

This partnership, known as ARC, funded by the United States of America President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), has been a very successful six year initiative, firstly in improving nursing and midwifery regulatory functions in east, central and southern Africa, and in the last three years in improving health and health service delivery outcomes for people living with HIV.

Unfortunately with the change of leadership in the USA, funding for the continuation of the ARC initiative is now uncertain. The current partnership comes to an end in August 2017 and at this stage it is unclear whether it will receive any further funding. The ARC partnership has made a significant contribution to improving leadership, regulation and standards during its six years of operation in the Africa region. The gains have been outstanding and it will be disappointing if the initiative comes to a close.

ARC was developed and implemented by nurses and midwives. Their vision was transformed into measurable and practical outcomes.

The achievements need to be celebrated which is why ARC is featured in this edition of *The Commonwealth Nurse*. I commend the feature to you. Many of the projects funded through ARC are relevant to nursing and midwifery in other Commonwealth countries such as national CPD frameworks and developing scopes of practice so do not hesitate to make contact with the countries concerned if you want to learn more about what they have achieved.

I was fortunate to be able to join with the Trained Nurses Association of India to conduct a leadership workshop at their premises in New Delhi and a report of that workshop is included in *The Commonwealth Nurse*. You often hear people say: "Leaders are born, not made", but I do not agree. Leadership skills can be learned and leadership training which develops the necessary skills and provides an opportunity for nurses and midwives to reflect on their own leadership potential and opportunities and learn how to apply the skills they have learned is really important.

Also in this issue we report on the first of three maternal health education and training sessions for midwives in Sierra Leone funded by The Burdett Trust for Nursing. The Burdett Trust has been supporting maternal health in Africa through the CNMF for many years now and have already funded five programs in Sierra Leone in 2011; two programs in Lesotho in 2015; one program in Malawi in 2016; and two programs in Tanzania in 2015 and 2016. The Sierra Leone program was conducted in Freetown.

Finally, another reminder about the 23rd CNMF Biennial Meeting of Members which will be held on Friday 9 March at the Royal College of Nursing, London UK. The Biennial Meeting is the decision making body of the CNMF and constitutional changes and policy statements will be debated and endorsed.

Also a reminder about the 4th Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Conference which will be held at the Royal College of Physicians, Regent's Park, London on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 March next year. The title for the conference is *Leading the Way: nurses and midwives for a safe, healthy and peaceful world*. A wide range of interesting abstracts and posters have been received from nurses and midwives across the Commonwealth which demonstrate the research, innovation, and expertise nurses and midwives are applying to their profession.

As mentioned in a previous editorial, our world today is far from being safe, healthy or peaceful. Nurses and midwives are in a unique position to act as role models and lead the way in promoting a safe, healthy and peaceful world.

The conference provides an opportunity for nurses and midwives across the Commonwealth to share their knowledge and experience, network with each other, and make new friends. I look forward to seeing you there.