

## PRACTICE AND HEALTH SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

*Nursing and midwifery expertise is fully integrated into decision-making processes at all levels, and health systems utilize best available practices for the care of individuals, families and communities.*

**THE BEGINNING** of this century has seen a veritable revolution in medical advances, health care delivery and the requirements of population health needs increasingly in transition. In order to meet these challenges effectively, efficiently, and equitably, decision-makers at all levels require tools, information and capacity to assess health care needs; to choose interventions; to design policy options appropriate to their circumstances; and to conduct effective monitoring with the aim of enhancing health systems performance (World Bank, 1993; WHO, 1999; WHO, 2000). Decision-makers also require adequate information on evidence-based nursing and midwifery practices that will help them realize cost-effective and high quality health care (Vonderheid et al., 2001). It is therefore necessary that nursing and midwifery expertise and intelligence be fully integrated into all levels of the relevant decision-making process. Models of the organization and management of nursing and midwifery service delivery need to be analysed and the best practices identified.

## OBJECTIVES ► EXPECTED RESULTS

**3.1 To improve access to quality nursing and midwifery services as an integral part of health services aimed at individuals, families and communities – particularly among vulnerable populations. This may be accomplished through the enhanced integration of successful nursing and midwifery service delivery models within health care systems.**

- 3.1.1 Innovative approaches identified, adapted and disseminated to bridge gaps between the health system and the needs of the community, specifically in terms of home-based care, palliative care, health promotion, disease prevention, rehabilitation and emergency care.
- 3.1.2 A comprehensive research agenda developed to strengthen nursing and midwifery services.
- 3.1.3 Evidence base further developed with partners on cost-effective nursing and midwifery services and their impact on priority diseases such as HIV/AIDS, ADH, MPR, Mental Health, TB and Malaria.
- 3.1.4 Guidelines established on the utilization of nurses and midwives to improve health outcomes in selected priority areas.
- 3.1.5 Models identified, adapted and disseminated for evaluating nursing and midwifery services.
- 3.1.6 Development supported for setting standards for nursing and midwifery practice and access facilitated to tools for assessment.
- 3.1.7 Models of decision-making identified and promoted that optimize the contribution of nursing and midwifery expertise.