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## Cook Islands marks World Health Day

7 April 2020

This year on World Health Day we salute our nurses and midwives. We salute them even more so in these anxious times we are going through. It's a terrible cliché but nonetheless true that some of the finest people we'll ever know will be nurses and midwives.

The world is currently in battle against COVID-19 and when in battle you need an army. If you think of the medical profession as being the army, the doctors would be the officers and the senior nurses would be the NCOs the non-commissioned officers; and in the army it's those senior NCOs – the sergeants-major and sergeants and corporals that really make the army work. They are the link with the private soldiers, they are often way more experienced than the junior platoon commanders, just as the senior nurses have far more experience than junior doctors and so on. Yes the doctors make the diagnosis but then it's the nurses who look after you.

They're there through the day and the night watching over you, noting and recording your vital signs so the doctor can evaluate them the next day. Nurses also ensure children are vaccinated to keep viruses away and support women's health through breast and cervical screening.

Likewise with midwives, through the ages they have looked after women through their pregnancies, and brought millions of babies into the world, mostly successfully and with little fuss. In recent years doctors have moved back into this area for complicated pregnancies, although midwives still support mothers through antenatal care before and during birth, and well-child checks after birth, including the promotion of breastfeeding.

The World Health Day is celebrated every year on April 7 to raise awareness around maintaining good health and a balanced lifestyle.

This year's World Health Day theme couldn't be more apt as it is dedicated to honour the indefatigable work of nurses and midwives across the globe.

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, thousands and millions of nurses are leaving behind their comfort and safety to fight the COVID-19 crisis and help those infected or suspected of coronavirus.

On this day, the World Health Organization calls for people to extend their gratitude and support nurses and midwives across the world. The WHO has named this year the 'International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife'.

Antonio Guterres – Secretary-General, United Nations – “World Health Day this year comes at a very difficult time for all of us. We are more grateful than ever to all of our health workers fighting the #COVID19 pandemic. You make us proud and you inspire us. We stand with you and we count on you.

Closer to home our Secretary of Health Dr Josephine Aumea Herman says “right now it’s all about serving our people. I acknowledge the commitment, the drive, the selflessness of all our health workforce. We have 130 nurses and midwives in the Cook Islands who are rising to the challenge each day to look after our people and to them I say meitaki maata. Your country thanks you.”

Today on World Health Day Tuesday 07 April 2020, at 330pm outside Tupapa outpatients emergency department, along the main road, come join us as we cheer in solidarity to acknowledge all our Cook Islands health professionals, doctors, nurses, midwives, clinical and general support staff in Rarotonga and the Pa Enuā.

Importantly, we applaud our health colleagues who have fallen to COVID-19 and support our health champions on the frontline who continue to fight this battle for our people all over the world.

If you are at home, stand outside your home, driveway, or the hospital, the Punas and cheer and applaud.

Do your Facebook, Instagram LIVES at the same time so we can all share and post to social media in acknowledgement and tribute.

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