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7th International Conference for Neonatal Nurses

The Neonatal Nursing Association of Southern Africa (NNASA) together with The Council of International Neonatal Nurses (COINN) are hosting the 7th International Conference for Neonatal Nurses (ICNN) at the ICC in Durban, South Africa, on 24-27th October 2010. This will be a groundbreaking conference and we aim to attract thousands of neonatal professionals from around the globe to come and share our vision.

COINN was established following the 5th International Neonatal Nurses Conference in Ottawa, Canada, in 2004. Prior to this, American, British, Australian and New Zealand national neonatal associations co-hosted four international conferences held in America, England (Harrogate) and Australia. The conferences are held every three years.

COINN's membership consists of national neonatal nursing associations including South Africa and Kenya. They also have 40 affiliate members/contacts – many in developing countries e.g. Russia, Liberia, Pakistan etc. COINN is in partnership with many organisations including ICN, WHO and The Partnership.

NNASA was formed in February 2007. Our board consists of six passionate neonatal nurses who have a vision to encourage and support neonatal nurses in southern Africa – particularly those in outlying areas. We want to improve communication among them, to promote evidenced-based standards of care and ultimately to improve the standard of neonatal care in the region. Our slogan "Reach for the stars" encompasses our belief that through teamwork you can reach beyond yourselves and achieve amazing things. We have hosted two national conferences since our inception and have held five regional workshops. We currently have approximately 170 members and are in the process of establishing regional branches in Johannesburg and Capetown.

The Unicef target MDG 4 aims for a 66% reduction in under-five mortality. More than 38% of these deaths occur in the neonatal period and half of these occur within the first week. Ninety-nine per cent of neonatal deaths arise in low and middle income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

In the light of this, NNASA (in association with COINN) was keen to bring the International Neonatal Nurses Conference to southern Africa with the following objectives:

- To highlight neonatal care in the region
- To provide the opportunity for African delegates

to attend an international conference of this nature

- To promote neonatal nursing as a specialty
- To highlight the fact that neonatal nurses are professionals who need to be part of the debate regarding policy
- To encourage the formation of national neonatal nursing associations and membership thereof
- To promote international communication
- To showcase neonatal care given within South Africa through hospital visits in the area
- To reward excellence

Our theme "Excellence against all odds – Researching solutions for global challenges" reflects the aim of all neonatal nurses to constantly give of their best in their pursuit of excellence in patient care. The conference will support this by offering pre-conference skills workshops and a comprehensive scientific programme of local and international presenters who will equip delegates with knowledge of the latest research and practice to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based neonatal care. Our parallel sessions will cover the following themes:

Hands-on:

- "Asking the right question" – Implementing the latest evidenced based practice, choosing research topics, interpreting the evidence
 - "In the baby's best interest" – Case management of difficult clinical/ethical problems
 - "The heart of management" – holistic management of baby, family and health team
- The global perspective:
- "Meeting the millennium goals" – international experiences, programmes
 - "Getting the mix right" – issues, recruitment and retention, workplace culture, models of care, collaboration etc
 - "learning in context" – preparation, competencies, orientation, preceptors, outreach programs, graduate programs etc

We hope to encourage innovation, reward excellence, inspire, motivate and promote passion for our calling. Although NNASA is a new association – dynamite comes in small packages! We hope you will support us in achieving our vision by partnering with us. We look forward to working together in order to make this the most successful and influential conference yet.

Registration for the 7th ICNN conference will open in June 2009. For more information contact Rene Dardagan-Bowyer on +27 31 3039852 or rene@confco.co.za. Please also visit our website on www.nnasa.org.za – there is a link to ICNN 2010.