



*This article is brought to you by **M/s Nurses-Careers Abroad**, a New Delhi, India based organisation specializing in placement of Indian / Asian Nurses in USA, Europe, Australia, New Zealand etc. Nurses-Careers Abroad makes available ON-Line training facilities for NCLEX-RN and IELTS, both pre-requisites for Nurses from this part of the world for jobs in America and accepted as sufficient qualification (often not as a qualifying requirement) for jobs in many countries in Europe and Australia /New Zealand.*

Such articles and other interesting facts /anecdotes about nursing profession are mailed by us on weekly basis to all Nurses registered with us at www.nurses-careers-abroad.com for Newsletter Distribution. Please register if you wish to be on the direct mailing list.

Since the articles are either from archives generally in public domain or contributed by some of you with no exclusive rights we do not place any restriction on your forwarding these articles to your friends in good faith.

Working Abroad as a Nurse

A Great Demand for Nurses Worldwide...By Caroline A. Polt, RN

(An old article but relevant even today Editorial)

In college I dreamed of having an international career. Several years after my sister ventured off to foreign lands to teach English, I decided to pursue the same route—not as an English teacher but as a nurse. Now it's my sister who is visiting me in a foreign land!

Since the skills and knowledge that U.S. educated nurses possess are highly regarded internationally, the profession can open doors to a wide array of possibilities for working abroad. The call for nurses is a cry heard from all corners of the globe, from developed nations to the developing world. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Nurses are the largest category of health workers. Nursing personnel make up over 50 percent of the health workforce in every country of the world. In many countries in the developing world, more than 80 percent of health workers are nurses."

Because of a global nursing shortage and a higher demand for nursing services, healthcare organizations are faced with staffing dilemmas that are reaching crisis levels in certain places. The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, reports that "Canada, the Philippines, Australia, and Western Europe are reporting significant

nursing shortages. Reports of shortages are also coming from Africa and South America (www.nursesource.org/facts_shortage.html#faq).



Caroline in a black "abaya" which all women in Saudi Arabia are required to wear in public. She is visiting the site of the old Saud settlement of Diriyah.

Faced with the spiraling labor shortages, healthcare organizations worldwide are scrambling to recruit nurses to fill positions through enticing advertisements in nursing journals as well as on nursing web sites (see sidebar). Just as the range of opportunities vary from place to place, so do salaries.

The most lucrative packages tend to be offered in Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In some countries benefits may outweigh salary. The seven weeks annual leave offered by many hospitals in England means the chance to

travel and may be more important than salary in determining which job is most desirable.

How to Land an International Nursing Job

The decision to work abroad as a nurse requires intense consideration. While motivation is important, the more informed you are the more rewarding your experience is likely to be.

A review of your reasons for wanting to work abroad will help you narrow your focus and assist you in determining which nursing job will meet your objectives. Here are some other considerations to keep in mind when pursuing an overseas nursing job.

- **Your Nursing Experience**

You will most likely be offered a job based on your previous career history. Later, once you have spent time working in an organization, you can expand your nursing skills and knowledge by pursuing another type of nursing job. Maria Eis, a Canadian nurse who has worked in the U.S. and most recently in Saudi Arabia, was hired to work on a renal transplant unit in a Riyadh hospital. She soon landed a job as a private-duty nurse providing care to a member of the Saudi royal family at home and even traveling with the family abroad.

- **Your Knowledge of the Language**

Communication plays a key role in the provision of healthcare. In order to effectively care for patients and practice safely, you should acquire a basic knowledge of the language of the country where you will be working.

As native speakers of English, American nurses may restrict their search for jobs in countries where English is the primary language. However, do not rule out other locations where healthcare organizations may also use English as their official language. Certain hospitals in the Middle East require that English be spoken among the staff, and all documentation is completed in English.

A basic knowledge of the language of the country is helpful when providing care to non-English speaking patients and interacting with local staff. At least learn conversational expressions and a list of common medical terms. While the hospital may offer language

classes and provide translators to aid in communication you should make every attempt to learn the language before and during your time overseas in order to fully appreciate the experience both personally and professionally.

Also keep in mind that while English may be spoken in other countries, terminology may vary. For example, in the U.K. head nurses are referred to as “sisters,” the operating room is called “the theater,” and the emergency room is known as “the accident and casualty department.”

- **Using Healthcare Recruiters**

Intermediaries, generally known as healthcare recruiters, specialize in the recruitment of healthcare professionals on behalf of employers. They can be found in advertisements in nursing journals and on the Internet. Recruiters can not only assist you with all the details that will enable you to work abroad as a nurse, they can also provide you with advice regarding banking, housing, and other relevant issues in preparation for your move overseas.

You can also answer advertisements and approach potential employers directly once you have obtained the necessary documentation regarding nursing registration from the country where you would like to work (see Nursing Registration below). While recruiters play a vital part in certain situations, such as finding jobs in developing nations or in major cities, keep in mind that many healthcare facilities in smaller locations outside metropolitan areas may not always utilize the services of recruiters.

Whichever route you take in your job search, doing your own homework is the best policy.

- **Nursing Registration**

You will need an appropriate work visa for the country where you are planning to work. In most cases, visas are obtained for nurses by the hiring organization. The issuance of visas can take days to months depending on the country, so plan to wait in some cases.

Nurses also must provide proof of licensure to practice their profession.

Where you are planning to work will determine whether you will need to register your nursing qualifications before being able to look for a job.

In countries with a licensing body that registers nurses you will need to contact the country's registration authority to learn what is required to work as a nurse in that country. To practice nursing in the U.K., for example, an overseas nurse must apply to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) for a British nursing

License (see below). From the initial request to the final outcome, the process may take from weeks to several months depending on the licensing board.

In countries where a system of nurse registration has not yet been established you will need to provide proof of your nursing licensure from the U.S. The healthcare facilities in these countries will honor your nursing license from the state issuing your license, thus it is imperative to maintain your American nursing registration. The code of professional conduct which you follow in the state where you are licensed must continue to be followed while you are working overseas.

If you want to work abroad as a nurse, there is no better time than the present. With thorough research, an open mind, and a sense of adventure, you can easily have your own international career.

CAROLINE A. POLT, RN, whose home is in Philadelphia, PA, currently works as a nurse in York, England. (When the article was published many years ago... .. Editorial)

.....

Attention:

We have received offers from Nurses for publishing Articles /Anecdotes / Real Life Experiences proposed to be forwarded by them to Nurses-Careers-Abroad. We heartily welcome the idea. We shall do so mentioning the name of the sender. Contributors are advised to submit their Name, Address, and Email and Phone Number so that we can cross check with them (for editing etc.) before publishing the article. Please bear in mind that we can publish only one article per week and subsequently these shall be archived at the website under Nurses Newsletter Archives.

Nurses-Careers Abroad also proposes to establish a “NURSES-BLOG” on the website for the Nursing Fraternity. Look for it at www.nurses.careers.abroad.com