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CONTACT:

Julie J. Adams

The Honor Society of Nursing,  
Sigma Theta Tau International

[julie@stti.org](mailto:julie@stti.org)

Direct Line: +1.317.917.4944 (International)

Toll-Free: 888.634.7575 (U.S./Canada)



## **Key Latin American Nurse Leaders Identify Regional Issues During Global Advisory Panel on the Future of Nursing Meeting**

*Meeting convened by the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International*

INDIANAPOLIS — The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) convened a regional meeting of the **Global Advisory Panel on the Future of Nursing (GAPFON)** 20-21 July 2015 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Key nurse leaders from Central and Latin America<sup>1</sup> were invited to participate in this meeting.

**Dr. Silvia Cassiani, Advisor, Nursing and Allied Health Personnel Development, Unit of Human Resources for Health, Department of Health Systems and Services at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)**, noted that “GAPFON is a new initiative created by STTI that is bringing together voices from the region to discuss issues related to nursing and health that will contribute to the goal of universal access to health and universal health coverage. It will create and strengthen partnerships and synergy to improve the health and quality of life in the American Region.”

### **GAPFON priority issues and health challenges in Latin America**

The Latin American nurse leaders confirmed that priority issues and action strategies must focus on the identified four priority issues. They also spoke strongly about the fact that these priority issues are inter-related and each is integral to the achievement of regional goals. They prioritized the issues as follows: **leadership; policy; education/curriculum; and workforce/practice**. The outcomes of this meeting reflected strong regional support for PAHO/WHO's nursing priority areas including education, research, policies and strategies, communication, and interprofessional collaboration.

In addition, the Latin American nurse leaders verbalized the importance of universal health care, and the value of leveraging technology and communication in all areas to assist in reaching this goal. They reiterated that ensuring access to health care – including community based care – is an area where nurses can play a pivotal leadership role. Given the increase in aging populations and non-communicable diseases throughout the region, they agreed that health promotion is vital.

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The Latin American nurse leaders identified the need to improve the workforce environment for nurses throughout the region, and suggested the establishment of regional standards of care and a broad nursing scope of practice that is tied to elevated levels of nursing preparation. They emphasized the importance of collaborating with colleagues from various professions, at all levels, regarding health care priorities. They noted that this collaboration is especially important to address the consequences from violence of various types across the region.

“Congratulations to GAPFON and Sigma Theta Tau for providing the opportunity for national and international associations and experts within nursing, to analyze the current situation and future challenges of nursing within the context of Latin America, toward global health. This action denotes the belief that we can achieve far-reaching results and impact when knowledge, experience and joint efforts, are combined with committed, solidary, innovative and respectful collaborative work. We have raised challenges and strategies that seek to ensure that nursing, within local contexts yet in a holistic view of global health care, makes its presence and voice an evidence-based instrument for change and innovation for the health of all populations in our region,” stated **Dr. Laura Morán Peña, President of Latin American Association of Schools and Colleges of Nursing (ALADEFE) and Titular Professor in National School of Nursing and Obstetrics at National Autonomous University of Mexico.**

Sponsored by Pfizer, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, GAPFON is a catalyst for nurse leaders to work together and develop a unified voice and vision for the future of nursing and health care globally. According to **STTI President Dr. Hester C. Klopper**, “the Latin American nurse leaders specifically noted the need for universal health coverage and the key role nurses and midwives have, working interprofessional in achieving the World Health Organization’s (WHO) goal of universal health coverage, addressing the U.N. post-2015 development agenda and the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health”.

During the next year, GAPFON will hold additional regional meetings with key stakeholder groups, including representatives from multiple sectors around the world, to obtain knowledge and social, economic, cultural, and political insight related to the priority issues determined at the regional meetings. Data from these meetings will provide the basis for an overall action plan with regional policy implications. GAPFON will analyze and prioritize key recommendations that address each of the region’s challenges in both global and regional summary reports and will post these at [www.gapfon.org](http://www.gapfon.org).

<sup>1</sup> Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay

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**About GAPFON**

The Global Advisory Panel on the Future of Nursing (GAPFON) was convened by The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) to establish a voice and a vision for the future of nursing that will advance global health. GAPFON seeks to provide evidence on the value of nursing and to participate in and influence health policy, nursing leadership and practice, education, and the global health agenda. GAPFON is sponsored by Pfizer, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. For more information about GAPFON, visit [www.gapfon.org](http://www.gapfon.org).

**About STTI**

The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is advancing world health and celebrating nursing excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service. Founded in 1922, STTI has more than 135,000 active members in more than 85 countries. Members include practicing nurses, instructors, researchers, policymakers, entrepreneurs and others. STTI's roughly 500 chapters are located at approximately 695 institutions of higher education throughout Armenia, Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, England, Ghana, Hong Kong, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Swaziland, Sweden, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, the United States, and Wales. More information about STTI can be found online at [www.nursingsociety.org](http://www.nursingsociety.org).