

Sappi honours its health staff on International Nurses' Day

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Each year, nurses around the world are honoured during international Nurses Week. These celebrations begin on 06 May and end on 12 May, on Florence Nightingale's birthday and International Nurses' Day. Most aptly the theme for 2021 is #WeAnswerTheCall. At Sappi Southern Africa, a dedicated group of individuals known as our Occupational Health Practitioners have done exactly that and have worked tirelessly 'answering the call' since the outbreak of the pandemic more than a year ago, and we take this opportunity to honour them for their outstanding service.

They have been at the forefront weathering the storm, individually and collectively going beyond the call of duty to ensure that Sappi employees are safe. They have gone to employees' homes, transported Covid-stricken employees to clinics and hospitals and been on call to take action after hours where employees have been in need. Many of them canceled their leave during the peak period of infection, forfeiting important time with their own families. Now they are working to help employees to get registered for vaccination and have been trained in administering vaccines when these become available. Throughout, they have also done a fantastic job in managing the mental wellness of Covid-positive employees as well as addressing concerns around stigma.

We salute each and every one of our health practitioners and say "Thank you" for taking care of our employees and their families in these trying times. Your selfless service is appreciated beyond what we can express in words. Thank you for answering the call.

View a short video commemorating our health staff [here](#).

About International Nurses Day

International Nurses Day is observed around the world on 12 May (the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth) of each year, to mark the contributions that nurses make to society. During the late 19th century, Florence Nightingale – or 'The Lady with the Lamp' - introduced strict handwashing and hygiene practices, thereby drastically reducing the death rate of wounded soldiers in the Crimean War by 40%. These practices ushered in modern nursing as we know it today.

Seldom in the history of the world has the importance of handwashing and hygiene been highlighted for each of us as it has been during this past year, as we faced the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, the world has stood in awe as it witnessed the selflessness and dedication to service as health workers around the world rallied to the call, putting their lives on the line as they dealt with the unknown risks of managing the pandemic.

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