

**THE WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION ON WOMEN'S  
RIGHTS TO HEALTH CARE AND HOW THAT RELATES TO THE  
PREVENTION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD HIV INFECTION**

Adopted by the WMA General Assembly, Washington 2002

**Preamble**

1. In many parts of the world the prevalence of HIV infection is rapidly increasing.
- 1.2. HIV/AIDS is a disease that mostly affects younger people.
- 1.3. In some parts of the world men who have sex with men and intravenous drug users are the main groups at risk from HIV. But in many parts of the world women are predominantly at risk from the pandemic.
- 1.4. The WMA believes that access to health care is a human right. This imposes an obligation on both governmental and non-governmental entities to ensure that the human rights of females are fully respected and protected and that gender inequalities are eradicated in both the public and private spheres of life.
- 1.5. The promotion and protection of the sexual and reproductive rights of women are critical to success in confronting the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

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**Recommendations**

6. Therefore the WMA asks member associations to encourage their Governments:
  - 6.1. to empower women of all ages so that they are free from discrimination and enjoy access to education, sex education and life skills training;
  - 6.1.6.2. to empower women to have equal access to employment, economic independence, health information and health services, and the benefits of scientific progress;
  - 6.1.6.3. to activate campaigns in the media, in order to eradicate myths, stigma and stereotypes that could degrade or dehumanize women;
  - 6.1.6.4. to review and revise laws, policies and practices that facilitate the full recognition and respect of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women;
  - 6.1.6.5. to provide as a minimum measure, prophylactic treatment to women who have been raped and also to women who are about to give birth and are HIV-positive, although treatment for such patients should ideally start as early as possible in pregnancy, all this to save lives and reduce the burden of infection.



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The World Medical Association Resolution on Women's Rights to Health Care and how that Relates to the Prevention of Mother-to-Child HIV Infection (Document MEC/HIVTrans/Oct2002) is an official policy document of the World Medical Association, the global representative body for physicians. It was first adopted by the WMA General Assembly, Washington 2002.