



144th EB Session
6.4 Health of refugees and migrants

Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Medical Association, which represents 9 million physicians worldwide.

We welcome the draft WHO Global Action Plan to Promote the Health of Refugees and Migrants developed in collaboration with IOM and UNHCR amongst other international organisations. This inclusive partnership constitutes a positive advancement to address the complexity of the issue, with health as an essential component of good migration governance. We welcome the references to the required need to develop educational tools for health professionals in relation with the health of migrants and refugees.

We recommend additions that would usefully complete the Plan in fostering proper access to health care to migrants and refugees in line with human rights and medical ethics standards:

1. The Plan should include an explicit reference to the right to health to refugees and migrants, regardless of the legal, civil or political status of the individual, therefore encompassing the case of undocumented migrants.
2. The Plan should also address the ethical challenge physicians might face and condemn any practice involving their participation to non-medically justified examination, diagnosis or treatment - such as sedatives to facilitate easy deportation, or bone examination for age assessment. These practices constitute a diversion of medically justified measures for police or judicial purposes. It seriously undermines the trustworthy patient-physicians relationship indispensable for the provision of quality care. It contravenes to medical ethics.
3. Regarding the priority 6 on health monitoring and health information systems, the ethical aspects of health data collection need to be addressed, namely the rights to confidentiality, autonomy and privacy as well as the required informed consent of the individuals concerned. These values are essential safeguards to any possible misuses in health data collection.

Thank you