

75th World Health Assembly - 2022

Constituency statement on agenda item 15. Human resources for health

Constituency formed by:

International Pharmaceutical Federation
International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation
World Medical Association
FDI World Dental Federation
World Confederation for Physical Therapy
March of Dimes
International League of Dermatological Societies

Honourable Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

I speak on behalf of a constituency of 7 organisations representing millions of health professionals and students worldwide.

We welcome the Action Plan. The Health Workforce (HWF) is the core of health systems. The shortage of health personnel will grow with the pandemic exacerbating that problem. Due to increased educational inequities, future health professionals have either ceased studying or received sub-standard education, further increasing the shortfall and widening skills-gaps. The governance of HRH issues is increasingly complex and we wish to see WHO play a central role to increase coherence between initiatives.

The delivery of high-quality health services depends on environments that support decent work conditions. Throughout the pandemic, healthcare personnel have worked long hours, faced unwarrantable violence and worsened mental health in high-pressure environments. Under-investment has resulted in the deterioration of working conditions. The “protection and performance” of the HWF requires legally binding strategies to guarantee the safety of health personnel especially in high-risk settings, including rural areas.

States should mobilize investments to retain healthcare professionals in the profession and in their country by providing the support they need to meet their goals. These retention strategies include protection, resourcing, training, career development and fair remuneration. NSA and Member states (MS) must implement the international code for recruitment of health personnel.

MS must improve the safety and sustainability of the HWF through accountability and instruments that enable data-driven decision-making by exploring legally binding mechanisms to uphold workforce rights, including all equity-seeking groups and to provide methods to analyze data to minimize institutional barriers including biases. The four domains of the Global health and care worker compact: preventing harm; providing support; inclusivity; and safeguarding rights, must be addressed by MS through policies and investments.

Lastly, professionals in training and early career professionals are often used as replacement labour or sent into the harshest working conditions. It is critical that they are not exploited and be put unprepared into dangerous situations, for their safety and that of patients.