



Virtual event

## **Policy Makers' Forum: Patient Safety Implementation**

23 and 24 February 2022, at 13:00-17:00 (CET), Geneva, Switzerland

Concept note

### **Background**

Patient harm due to adverse events has been recognized as one of the ten leading causes of morbidity and mortality globally. Patient safety is a critical global public health issue, fundamental to strengthening of health care systems and is at the heart of universal health coverage (UHC). Expanding access to health services means nothing unless those services are safe, as "first do no harm" remains the foundational principle of any health care system. If health care itself poses a threat to people's health, the benefit of increased health coverage is completely lost.

The Year 2016 discovered new horizons giving rise to a strong global patient safety movement. Political leadership from the Governments of the UK and Germany recognized the huge burden of avoidable harm in health care. This was the beginning of a remarkable initiative of annual [Global Ministerial Summits on Patient Safety](#), which have created unprecedented momentum on patient safety globally. Four successful annual Summits have so far been organized and delivered by the governments of UK (2016), Germany (2017), Japan (2018) and Saudi Arabia (2019). The Summits have been instrumental in engaging political leaders, policy makers and international experts to galvanize global action on patient safety.

This global momentum led to the recognition of 'patient safety as a global health priority' by the 72nd World Health Assembly in May 2019, including the adoption of WHA resolution [\(WHA72.6\) "Global Action on Patient Safety"](#) urging Member States to recognize patient safety as a key priority in health sector policies and programmes. The resolution established 'World Patient Safety Day' as an official WHO day to be observed annually on 17 September. The Health Assembly also requested the Director-General to formulate a global patient safety action plan. In May 2021, the 74<sup>th</sup> WHA approved the [Decision WHA74\(13\)](#) to adopt the first ever [Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030](#) "Towards eliminating avoidable harm in health care" as the global roadmap for patient safety for the next 10 years. This WHA decision also mandates WHO to report back on progress in the implementation of the action plan to the assembly in 2023 and thereafter every two years till 2031.

Health care leaders and policy makers have a vital role in implementing WHA patient safety resolutions and decisions, in order to realize the global vision on patient safety. This includes recognition of patient safety as a key priority in health sector policies and programmes and taking concrete steps in implementation of the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030 at national, subnational, organizational and facility levels.

### **WHO Policy Makers' Forum: Patient Safety Implementation**

Since 2020, no Patient Safety Summits have been organized, and the fifth Summit scheduled for 2020 could not be held due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Going forward, there is a high level of interest of global leaders in the Patient Safety Summits, and it is envisioned that the fifth Summit would be organized under the leadership of the Swiss govt in 2023. This, however, would lead to a gap of four years in the high-level political advocacy and could create a big hiatus in the global patient safety momentum, when the engagement of health care leaders and senior policy makers is vital at this stage for taking urgent action and initiating implementation of the global action plan which was adopted by WHA74 in May 2021.

Based on recommendations of the Steering Committee for Global Ministerial Summits on Patient Safety, and those emerging from the WHO Global Consultation ‘Partners in action: Engaging stakeholders for implementing the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030’ held in August 2021, WHO Patient Safety Flagship: A Decade of Patient Safety 2021-2030 is planning to convene a (virtual) **“Policy Makers’ Forum: Patient Safety Implementation”** on 23 and 24 February 2022, at 13:00-17:00 (CET). This forum will provide a global platform for engaging with senior policy makers and health care leaders in the discussion around implementation approaches of the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030 within broader health agenda at country level. This will allow sharing of best practices and lessons learned in addressing patient safety at policy and practice levels and will pave a way for:

- mutual learning and understanding of barriers and constraints in addressing the causative and contributory factors leading to harm in health care, and in adopting a health systems approach to eliminating avoidable harm in health care.
- identifying actionable and scalable solutions, applicable to different settings and contexts.
- developing a consensus on the role of policy makers and health care leaders in eliminating avoidable harm in health care.

### **Participants**

The forum will bring together senior policy makers, health care leaders and patient safety officers at national, subnational/regional, organizational and facility levels from countries representing all WHO regions. Invitations will also be extended to other organizations including academic and research organizations, inter-governmental organizations including United Nations agencies, the European Union, Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development, and the World Bank, as well as key non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations, including patients’ organizations. Interpretation will be available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

### **Objectives of the Forum**

The overall objective of this forum is to provide a foundation for effective implementation of the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030, which would ultimately lead to sustainable reduction in avoidable harm in health care. Specific objectives of this forum are, to:

1. Review the evidence of avoidable harm in health care.
2. Identify gaps, challenges and barriers in patient safety implementation, and trends in improvements.
3. Share experiences, best practices and lessons learned in addressing patient safety at policy and practice levels, and implementation approaches, mechanisms and resources for working towards elimination of harm in health care, through a health systems approach.
4. Recognize and reach a consensus on the role of policy makers and health care leaders at national, subnational, organizational and health care facility levels, in implementation of the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030.

### **Expected outcomes of the Forum**

1. Enhanced understanding of gaps, challenges and barriers in patient safety implementation.
2. Elaboration of best practices in addressing patient safety at policy and practice levels, and implementation approaches, mechanisms and resources that can contribute to the elimination of harm in health care.
3. Recognition of the roles and responsibilities of policy makers and health care leaders to initiate and/or scale up patient safety implementation, aligned with the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030.
4. A consensus statement on role of policy makers and health care leaders in eliminating avoidable harm in health care.