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Primary health care news

Transforming vision into action

First Issue Q4 2020



From the Special Programme

Dear Colleagues

On behalf of the World Health Organization Special Programme on Primary Health Care, welcome to Primary health care news, WHO's official quarterly newsletter on primary health care. Through this newsletter we will be sharing updates on the primary health care efforts of WHO and of our partners throughout the year.

This year has been challenging in so many respects, but our resolve to make universal health coverage truly universal and put people first remains strong. Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic have shown us again the need to focus on the fundamentals: engagement with people and communities; strong primary care; essential public health functions; and multisectoral actions to address the determinants of health. It also reminded us that strong primary health care is closely linked with health system resilience and effective recovery from the pandemic. Primary health care is rooted in equity, solidarity and social justice. It focuses on people's needs and preferences as early as possible along the continuum from health promotion and disease prevention to treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care, and as close as feasible to people's everyday environment.

We must not lose the resolve demonstrated in the [Declaration of Astana](#) and in the high-level political declaration on universal health coverage, and must act now together to ensure that PHC features strongly in our response to the pandemic -- delivering essential health services, supporting health workers, delivering vaccines and essential medical commodities, building trust, and empowering the people to co-create and co-develop health and well-being.

We are pleased to share with you our progress, including the approval of the Operational Framework for Primary Health Care at the seventy-third session of the World Health Assembly, and hope you will join us at the upcoming launch.

Together we will achieve health for all, leaving no one behind.

I thank you for reading this and for joining us.

Suraya Dalil, MD, MPH

Director, Special Programme on Primary Health Care

Topics in PHC

As the [Declaration of Astana](#) sets out, a comprehensive primary health care approach upholds the right to health, promote social justice, empower individuals and communities, and address the determinants of health. They are also fundamental to achieving [universal health coverage](#).

But PHC is not one and done. It is not a single intervention, programme or goal. Rather, it is an approach that must take into account a large number of medical, geographical, socioeconomic, environmental and political factors affecting health and well-being.

In order to ensure that a PHC approach is an integral part of the organization's work across all three strategic priorities of healthier populations, universal health coverage, and health emergencies, as well as being practical and available at the country, regional and global echelons, WHO has established the Special Programme on Primary Health Care (SP-PHC).

The SP-PHC serves three core functions:

Country impact - Provides a one-stop mechanism for PHC implementation support to Member States, thus putting into action the Operational Framework for PHC;

Evidence and innovation - produces PHC-oriented evidence and innovation, including measuring PHC progress, with a sharper focus on people left behind, while ensuring technical coherence and conceptual clarity on PHC-relevant global goods; and

Policy and partnership - Promotes PHC renewal through advocacy and partnership with stakeholders at global, regional and country levels

As an agile, integrated platform, the SP-PHC will provide advice and assistance in building people-centred, resilient and sustainable PHC-based health systems. One practical tool already available to help countries deliver on a PHC approach is the [Operational framework on primary health care](#).

The Operational Framework is being launched in partnership with the Ministry of Health of Kazakhstan and UNICEF at an [online event](#) on Monday, December 14. This document outlines a series of 14 levers, both strategic and operational, to help countries understand and implement a PHC-based approach. Join us to hear about country experiences in implementing a comprehensive PHC approach.

News Roundup

COVID-19 has exposed glaring weaknesses and inequalities in health systems around the world. What we have seen is that countries with a strong primary health care approach were more resilient, and were better equipped to prepare and respond. We'd like to share with you some stories of PHC in action around the world:

[Pakistan: restoring essential health services during COVID-19](#)

[Colombia: responding with an intercultural health model](#)

Events

The following is a list of PHC-related events that you may find of interest:



14 December 2020

11:00-12:45

Transforming vision into action: launch of the Operational framework for primary health care

[Join us here](#)



15 December 2020

14:00-15:30 CET

Social participation and people's voice: the missing piece in the UHC puzzle

WHO, the Health System Governance Collaborative, UHC2030, and the UHC Partnership are co-hosting the launch of the 'Handbook on Social Participation for Universal Health Coverage'. The handbook provides best practice guidance to policymakers on how to effectively and meaningfully engage with populations, communities and civil society in national health policy processes.

[Register here](#)

15 December 2020

16:00 Astana

Let's talk primary health care - Delivering primary health care on a dual-track

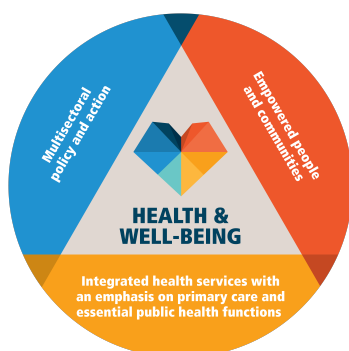


influencers, implementers, and health managers primarily in the WHO European Region.

The pilot edition will focus on the changing role of primary health care during the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinar will ask the question whether recent changes reflect deep transformation or a potentially short-lived emergency response.

Join us for a live Zoom-based conversation with prominent global and European speakers. In English and Russian

[Register here](#)



16 December 2020

14:00-16:00 EET

Primary Health Care for Universal Health Coverage

Presenting the 2020 achievements of the Regional Joint Workplan 2020-2021 for EMR GAP Accelerators 1 partners. The achievements are products of the joint collaboration between WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) and United Nations partners, including United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) in the EMR.

[Register here](#)

Technical Information

community, and through the community, ensuring health for all at all ages. The Technical Series on Primary Health Care can be found [here](#)

We also have available for you a series of webinars on various PHC-related topics, which can be found [here](#), along with copies of previous issues of this newsletter.

Questions? Comments? Ideas to share? Please write to us at [**primaryhealthcare@who.int**](mailto:primaryhealthcare@who.int)



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