

World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA)



**Health professionals demand stronger and real commitments
to improve health systems and invest more in the health workforce
to improve people's health outcomes**

6 July 2021

Ministers and high-level representatives are meeting this week in the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC. One of the main outcomes of the event is the expected agreement on a ministerial declaration on the theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”. The World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA), representing over 41 million health professionals, reminds policy makers that health and care professionals were and continue to be severely affected by COVID-19, both personally and professionally. Although the current draft declaration covers many areas of concern and encourages agreement on the way forward, it lacks tangible commitments to changing the situation and mechanisms for measuring progress towards stronger health systems and a more resilient health and care workforce.

Specifically, WHPA calls on concrete action and ambitious financial commitments to effectively help safeguard our underfunded, COVID-affected health systems. This is critical to ensuring the health, safety and retention of our essential health workforce and the community at large. We must do better to protect health professionals, their patients, families, communities, and the broader health of countries.

Ministers are reminded to refer to the concrete actions listed in the [main report of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response](#) (IPPPR) which was presented at and noted at the 74th session of the World Health Assembly.

With the designation of 2021 as the International Year of Health and Care Workers (YHCW) by the World Health Organization (WHO), WHPA and its members are paying tribute in 2021 by advocating for those working in healthcare. To tackle the high attrition rate of health professionals worldwide, WHPA believes that significant improvements are required on all levels and in most nations to strengthen health and healthcare by providing better recognition, better workplaces, and better working conditions.

WHPA's [Positive Practice Environments campaign](#) focuses on improving the workplace for all health personnel and contributing to making work in healthcare more attractive, dignifying, and effective. This campaign is a building block to achieving WHO's Triple Billion targets. Without a strong, motivated and highly qualified health workforce, it will not be possible to achieve universal health coverage, protect people from health emergencies, or have better overall health and well-being.

Ends

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The [World Health Professions Alliance \(WHPA\)](#) speaks for more than 41 million health care professionals worldwide, assembling essential knowledge and experience from the key health care professions in more than 130 countries.

WHPA was formed in 1999 and now brings together the global organizations representing the world's dentists, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and physicians. We work to facilitate collaboration among the health professions and major stakeholders such as governments and international organizations, including the World Health Organization. By working in collaboration, instead of along parallel tracks, patients and health care systems benefit.

Together, the partners of WHPA include more than 600 national member organizations, making us the key point of global access to health care professionals within the five disciplines.

[FDI World Dental Federation \(FDI\)](#) serves as the principal representative body for more than one million dentists worldwide with membership comprising of some 200 national dental associations in about 130 countries.

The [International Pharmaceutical Federation \(FIP\)](#) is the global federation of national organisations representing more than four million pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists and pharmaceutical educators around the world.

The [International Council of Nurses \(ICN\)](#) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations, representing the more than 27 million nurses worldwide.

[World Physiotherapy](#) is the sole international voice for physiotherapy, representing more than 660,000 physiotherapists worldwide through its 125 member organisations.

The [World Medical Association \(WMA\)](#) is an international organisation representing more than nine million physicians with its membership of 115 national medical associations.

'Stand Up For Positive Practice Environments', a campaign initiated by the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA), highlights the need for urgent action to address the global health workforce crisis; too many countries have desperate shortages of health professionals, impacting negatively on people's health outcomes and health worker well-being. The reasons are complex. A prevailing reason, however, is the poor quality of most healthcare work environments that are undermining health service delivery and driving health professionals away from their caregiving role and country.

Positive Practice Environments – health care settings that support excellence and decent work conditions – have been proven to have the power to attract and retain staff, provide quality patient care

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and strengthen the health sector as a whole. That's why WHPA's worldwide campaign is urging health professionals, managers, governments, policy and decision-makers, and community leaders, to 'Stand Up For Positive Practice Environments.'

www.positivepracticeenvironments.org