Statement on universal health coverage

156th session of the WHO Executive Board

Pillar 1: One billion more people benefiting from universal health coverage

6. Universal health coverage

4 February 2025

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

The WHO's Universal Health Coverage (UHC) program is anchored in the core values of primary healthcare (PHC). Family doctors are essential to delivering these values—comprehensive care, accessibility, continuity, coordination, and community connection.

Family doctors integrate prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation to provide holistic care. Their community insight enables early intervention, effective chronic disease management, and impactful health promotion. Evidence shows that populations with consistent access to family doctors experience better survival rates, reduced hospitalizations, and lower reliance on emergency services.

Despite their critical role, family doctors are often under-resourced. Ensuring universal access to trained family doctors is vital for healthcare quality, patient safety, and sustainable health systems.

WONCA calls on Member States to prioritize family medicine specialization and develop strategies to recruit and retain family doctors. These actions are key to addressing noncommunicable diseases, aging populations, and health inequalities while upholding PHC principles.

By strengthening family doctors, we advance UHC for all.

Thank you.