

## Statement on Global Action on Patient Safety

74th World Health Assembly (Agenda item 13.1, 13.5 and 13.8)

24 May 2021

The World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) representing over half a million doctors, welcomes the Global Patient Safety Action Plan, the emphasis on antimicrobial resistance and the 2030 Immunization Agenda.

WONCA's mission is to improve the quality of life of the peoples of the world through Family Medicine values that include promoting personal, comprehensive, and continuing care for the individual and the family in the context of the community and society, fostering high standards of care to guarantee patient safety first, and avoiding harm. Family doctors have demonstrated their strong commitment to community health during the pandemic.

WONCA's activities on quality and patient safety are developed through academic organizations, forums for exchange of knowledge and a WONCA Working Party on Quality and Safety in Family Medicine (WP). The WP promotes information exchange and implementation of safe practices in primary care, endorsing Global Patient Safety Challenges, which include hand-hygiene, medication without harm, use of appropriate antimicrobials only when indicated, learning from patient safety incidents, and giving support to patients, families, and health professionals in the aftermath of adverse events. Family Doctors have been on the front-line providing health care in person, in the clinic, in the home, and via telehealth, both to patients with COVID19 and other health needs. They are actively participating in the vaccination process, with special attention to vulnerable populations. Family doctors have been managing social and professional risks to guarantee the safer and best quality health care possible.

WONCA members have contributed to the development and launching of the Global Patient Safety Action Plan and are committed to continuing its strong collaboration with WHO through consultations, the promotion of the plan, and celebration of the yearly World Patient Safety Day. Last year's World Patient Safety Day was dedicated to the safety of professionals in order to ensure safe care. Family doctors are aware of the need for the use of personal protective equipment in the pandemic and of the importance of their emotional well-being in responding to the health needs of the community in these complex pandemic times.

Family doctors manage health risk to guarantee safe care for patients, the community, and the primary care workforce. As leaders of primary care teams, they ensure safe patient care by implementing safe practices with members of their teams and teaching their trainees. They are trusted leaders in their communities and are committed to encouraging patients and families as partners in safe care. Family doctors have reinforced their role as community health referents in the pandemic. They are trusted voices in the acceptance of vaccines.

WONCA encourages governments to invest in strong and safe primary care, in support of the health workforce and in health information systems, as the best efficient initiatives to achieve safe universal health coverage. Our vision is that the provision of quality healthcare in a safe environment should be universally available to all peoples. The assessment report of the Pandemic made by the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response of the World Health Organization (WHO) has recognized that those countries with a stronger primary care have offered a better response to the pandemic and recommend investing in primary care to face new global health challenges.

Investing in primary healthcare, and family doctor led primary health care teams, is one of the most cost-effective practice governments should put in place to face future global health risks.