

# WONCA-WHO Liaison



## **WONCA Statement of support for the World Health Organization**

In June 2020, WONCA released the following statement (endorsed by WONCA Executive) outlining its support for WHO in the current coronavirus pandemic:

*The COVID-19 Pandemic constitutes a serious public health crisis, affecting all countries in the world. WONCA recognizes the World Health Organization's critical and leading role during the pandemic, working across six regions, delivering essential equipment, providing technical guidance and education, and mobilizing resources while emphasizing health for all.*

*WONCA will continue to partner with WHO in its efforts to improve health through providing comprehensive care for people of all ages and encouraging Universal Health Coverage through strong Primary Health Care; and will continue to collaborate in technical papers, educational resources, and policy support.*

In addition, WONCA signed on to letters in support for WHO as a member of the Global Coalition for Circulatory Health <https://www.world-heart-federation.org/news/global-coalition-of-circulatory-health-on-who-funding/> and as a global member of the Civic Society Engagement Mechanism for UHC 2030 <https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/COVID-19-WHO-CSEM-Response.pdf>

## **COVID-19: Health Services Learning Hub**

WHO has invited WONCA to be a member of the COVID-19: Health Services Learning Hub. The goal of the hub is to drive activated learning to maintain essential health services in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic - and transform health services for the future. WONCA will coordinate with member organizations how best to participate in this endeavour, and who the Member Organisation focal points will be to collaborate.

## **WHO Executive Board and World Health Assembly**

WONCA did not attend the WHO Executive Board meeting in February, given there had been several new WHO discussions for change of status (and confusion) around participation of non-state actors. We participated in WHA73 on 22 May 2020 virtually, using video conference technology. The meetings had an emphasis on the COVID 19 Pandemic, a reduced agenda to fit into two days.

The following is WONCA's written statement to the WHA:

### **Statement:**

WONCA represents 550,000 family doctors in 150 countries working at the frontline of primary health care (PHC). "First in, Last out," Family Doctors have a strong and continuous role in the fight against novel coronavirus.

Family doctors are often the first contacts of patients in the fight against outbreaks and manage people's chronic conditions, mental health and preventive measures, with attention to the whole family and the community. A key problem is that many countries put all the emphasis on hospital-centred models, often relegating PHC to the margins, when PHC should have been at the forefront of a pandemic response.

### **WONCA recommends**

1. Appropriate funding for PHC, and an increase in the numbers of family doctors and other members of the healthcare team trained so that every country is prepared to manage the pandemic.
2. Ensure access to care, drugs & diagnostics availability for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 conditions.
3. Family doctors and other PHC professionals are central to health emergency risk management, preparedness and communication locally & nationally. To ensure their protection, PPE must be provided to all.
4. Rural migrants, inner city dwellers, people living in multigenerational family units, refugees and other vulnerable populations are often the worst affected; adequate consideration should be given to their socioeconomic and health needs.
5. More widespread testing to better understand the true prevalence of disease in the community
6. Breaking silos and providing innovation in data and technology with data integration, allowing much improved health information exchange between hospitals, PHC, labs, practices, and health departments.
7. PHC needs to be included in Humanitarian Aid and Global Health planning and budgeting. Without PHC the outcomes of this and future pandemics and disasters will be worse.

Success will come from investing in the frontline with well-resourced PHC teams working at the community level

**WHO teleconferences:** several working teleconferences held. Participants have included for WHO: Ed Kelley, Shannon Barkley, John Fogarty, WHO Division of UHC and Life Course

For WONCA: Donald Li, Anna Stavdal, Shabir Moosa, Monica Burns, Viviana Martinez-Bianchi, Garth Manning. Much of the discussion revolved around COVID and how WONCA can help with dissemination of information, and members providing access to care.

Action points included:

- identify mechanisms for dissemination of WHO guidance through WONCA networks
- identify opportunities for WONCA's support on evidence review or guideline review
- opportunities for WONCA to participate in forthcoming learning platforms for maintaining essential health services
- identify WONCA activities where WHO can support, e.g. webinars
- identify a list of WHO resource people who could join the WONCA webinars panel (this is ongoing, with WHO representation in our WONCA Webinars)

**The WHO Academy** is rapidly upscaling training via a number of digital, easily accessible, learning applications. Please help WHO design and prioritise content and delivery methodologies that support and enable health workers worldwide boost their knowledge and skills related to the COVID-19 outbreak. A survey went out, closed now. Here is a link. <https://www.who.int/about/who-academy>

### **WHO material on COVID 19.**

Great informational material <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

**Strategic and Technical Advisory Group of Experts (STAGE) for maternal, newborn, child, adolescent health, and nutrition**, “based on a widely distributed open call”. The STAGE will report to the WHO Director General and will be supported by a Secretariat housed within WHO. The inaugural meeting to formally launch the initiative was held (virtually due to COVID-19) on April 30 and May 1, 2020. The Terms of Reference and profiles of all members are available on the STAGE website:

[https://www.who.int/maternal\\_child\\_adolescent/stage/mncahn\\_current\\_members\\_list\\_bios/en/](https://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/stage/mncahn_current_members_list_bios/en/)

We were asked to provide relevant comments on the proposed Terms of Reference and membership, which we did. And we provided comment that WONCA should have direct representation in this group. I have noticed, however, that we do not show up on the list of partners contributing to the WHO Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health. This is an area we need to improve.

[https://www.who.int/maternal\\_child\\_adolescent/links/who/en/](https://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/links/who/en/)

WONCA was invited to observe the April and May session and I have submitted a statement that reads: « *WONCA, the World Organization of Family Doctors, represents 600,000 family doctors/general practitioners in every region of the world. We are the only medical specialty taking care of the whole family unit. We care for all age groups, provide prenatal care, labor and delivery, care for babies, children, adolescents and adults, in urban, suburban and rural environments. Health prevention, and advice on nutrition, are aspects of everyday life for our front-line clinical teams. WONCA hopes to be invited as a participant in the STAGE team in the future. WONCA looks forward to the recommendations of STAGE and commits to sharing the STAGE recommendations to PHC teams around the world.* »

WONCA received an invitation for a **WHO ad-hoc consultation on managing the COVID-19 infodemic**. Organized by the EPI-WIN team at World Health Organization, which took place on Zoom 7–8 April 2020, 14–17h Geneva time on both days. (‘infodemic’ - an over-abundance of information – some accurate and some not – that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it, and for policy-makers to use in policy-making.) The aim of this technical consultation was to develop an infodemic response framework to guide targeted interventions to promote dissemination of reliable information about COVID-19, and reduce misinformation, rumours and myths about COVID-19. I attended on behalf of WONCA. The presentations are included in this link <https://www.who.int/teams/risk-communication/who-ad-hoc-online-consultation-on-managing-the-covid-19-infodemic>

**Death of Dr. Peter Salama, Executive Director of WHO’s Division for Universal Health Coverage – Life Course**. Peter was in charge of the agenda for PHC, and his premature death was a big blow to WHO and those who knew him. <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/24-01-2020-who-mourns-passing-of-dr-peter-salama>. No person has been named yet to take his important place. WONCA submitted a letter of condolence.

### **WHO regional work**

I have been working with Jacqueline Ponzio and representatives from PAHO, to draft an MOU between WONCA CIMF and PAHO, which was to be signed during the Puerto Rico Cumbre on April 28, but plans were delayed due to COVID 19. The draft in Spanish is agreed by PAHO, and translation into English was sent to the team for approval. I am trying to engage North America region as well. Some PAHO colleagues have been attending the WONCA CIMF Zoominars.

**AfroPHC:** amazing work has been done by Shabir on AfroPHC, which includes WHO Africa officers. The first AfroPHC Steering Group meeting took place on Tuesday 21st January. WHO AFRO is a member. The first conference of AfroPHC was going to take place 18-21 June 2020 at Wits University, Johannesburg but had to be suspended due to the Pandemic.

Let me know of work in other regions so I can keep a good eye, and let me know of opportunities to help

### **Partnerships deriving from WHO collaboration**

#### **Civil Society Engagement Mechanism for UHC2030 (CSEM)**

The International Health Partnership for UHC2030 (UHC2030) is the global movement to strengthen health systems for Universal Health Coverage (UHC), as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is a multi-stakeholder platform that promotes collaborative work at global and country levels on Health Systems Strengthening (HSS), advocates for increased political commitment to UHC, and facilitates accountability and knowledge sharing. We became an official partner in October 2019 during the UN High Level Meeting. <https://csemonline.net/> A webinar on the civil society response on COVID 19 was done on April 21 <https://csemonline.net/project/webinar-civil-society-participation-in-the-covid-19-response/>

#### **Primary Health Care Performance Initiative**

Primary sources <https://improvingphc.org/blog/2020/04/22/introducing-primary-sources>. PHCPI, in partnership with WONCA and AfroPHC, have started a new blog series, “Primary Sources”, highlighting stories from across the globe, focusing on:

- how countries are mobilizing their PHC systems to respond to COVID-19;
- how the pandemic is impacting the delivery of essential PHC services; and
- key experiences and lessons learned that can help others in similar situations.

#### **The Global Coalition for Circulatory Health**

The Global Coalition for Circulatory Health (GCCH) provided a global perspective on the circulatory risk factors and outcomes associated with COVID-19 and covered ways of supporting the healthcare workforce. Dr Viviana Martínez Bianchi, WONCA Member-at-Large & WHO Liaison, represented WONCA. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnclWeJlvvA>

#### **LINKS to documents of importance to WONCA**

WHO Website on PHC: [https://www.who.int/health-topics/primary-health-care#tab=tab\\_3](https://www.who.int/health-topics/primary-health-care#tab=tab_3)

Primary Healthcare Operational Framework [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/primary-health-care-conference/operational-framework.pdf?sfvrsn=6e73ae2a\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/primary-health-care-conference/operational-framework.pdf?sfvrsn=6e73ae2a_2)

PHC Accelerator document <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/global-action-plan/accelerator2.pdf>

Global Action Plan <https://www.who.int/sdg/global-action-plan>

High Level Commission, 2017 Resolution <https://www.who.int/hrh/com-heeg/en/>

WHO Workforce 2030 [https://www.who.int/hrh/resources/pub\\_globstrathrh-2030/en/](https://www.who.int/hrh/resources/pub_globstrathrh-2030/en/)

Recife Report 2013- No health without the workforce

<https://www.who.int/workforcealliance/knowledge/resources/hrhreport2013/en/>

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