

Agenda Item 8.4

Strategy and Plan of Action on Strengthening the Health System to Address Violence Against Women: Final Report Document CD63/INF/4

Presentation by Dr Tania Whitby-Best

The World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) welcomes PAHO's Strategy and Plan of Action to strengthen health systems in addressing violence against women.

Family doctors are not only the first point of contact within health systems: we provide continuous, longitudinal care grounded in deep community trust. This unique therapeutic relationship enables family physicians to recognize subtle physical, psychological, and behavioral indicators of abuse early—often before overt physical trauma occurs—and to offer ongoing, holistic support to survivors across their lifespan.

To translate this plan into action, WONCA urges PAHO and Member States to prioritize three key actions:

1. **Integrate Primary Prevention into Primary Care:** Position family medicine practices as trusted community spaces for early intervention, identification of risk factors, and proactive health education.
2. **Institutionalize Trauma-Informed Education:** Mandate training in trauma- and violence-informed care across medical education and primary care CPD programs, equipping clinicians to detect non-obvious signs, communicate safely, and navigate local multi-sectoral referral pathways.
3. **Advance Primary Care Data Collection and research:** Invest in robust primary care data systems to capture the real-world incidence and health outcomes of violence against women, ensuring evidence-based, context-specific interventions.

Addressing violence against women demands intersectoral action. WONCA remains committed to partnering with PAHO to build resilient, primary care-led health systems that protect, support, and restore dignity to women and girls across the Americas.