

Health workforce/ WHO

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About the Department of Human Resources for Health

The mission of the WHO Department of Human Resources for Health is "to provide equitable access for all people to an adequately trained, skilled and supported health workforce to contribute towards the attainment of the highest possible level of health." Office of the Director.

The Director's office represents WHO's HRH strategic directions at international for a and advocates for the directions set by the WHA resolutions on HRH within international, multi-lateral and bilateral technical assistance and donor community. It provides the overall technical and administrative coordination with the regional HRH focal points and WHO/HQ priority programs. It provides the overall management of the Department and supports the four teams:

Health Workforce Education and Production (HEP)

The HEP team develops and supports the implementation of policies and strategies that aim to increase the relevance, quality and capacity of health workforce education and training. This includes strengthening institutions and faculties to educate and train a skilled health workforce; promoting investments to improve educational infrastructure; devising mechanisms for improving access to educational materials and technologies; and enhancing national capacities to respond to the health needs of countries through quality education and training, and well-regulated practice.

Health Workforce Migration and Retention (HMR)

The HMR unit analyses trends in workforce migration in order to develop and evaluate effective mechanisms for the management of international health workforce migration, including the development of an international code of practice. The team also supports and develops policy options that aim to improve workforce recruitment, deployment, retention, return, motivation and performance. In this context, HMR is undertaking a series of country case studies which

will inform the development of WHO guidelines for improving health workforce retention in remote and rural areas.

Health Professions Networks, Nursing and Midwifery (HPN)

The work of the team is firmly founded on the WHA Resolutions, Strategic Directions on Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery and the Global Programme of Work. The aim is to strengthen nursing and midwifery workforce and other professions' capacity to meet population health needs, collaboratively, with various networks, partners and WHO priority programmes. Strategies involve development of national health plans to ensure adequate health services through interprofessional approaches, guidelines and policy options for effective management and utilization of health workers. This also includes provision of technical support for improved access to health services based on primary health care core competencies, proven care models and standards, promotion of collaborative practice, self-regulation and quality care.

Health Workforce Information and Governance (HIG)

The HIG team works with countries and partners to strengthen capacity to address health workforce governance challenges by providing strategic information; policy and planning advice and technical cooperation; tools, guidelines, norms and standards on health workforce assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation. The team works to strengthen the global information and evidence base on HRH through the collection, processing and dissemination of cross-nationally comparable data on the health workforce. It also works closely with WHO regional and country offices to facilitate the development of health workforce observatories and other cooperative mechanisms for sharing experiences, information and evidence to support policy decision making.

Health workforce



Health workers are "all people engaged in actions whose primary intent is to enhance health" (World Health Report 2006).

Workers in health systems around the world are experiencing increasing stress and insecurity as they react to a complex array of forces. Ageing population, new diseases as well as increasing burden of current diseases, escalating conflicts and violence, are all challenges to which the workforce must be prepared to respond.

The unmistakable imperative is to strengthen the workforce so that health systems can tackle crippling diseases and achieve national and global health goals. A strong human infrastructure is fundamental to closing today's gap between health promise and health reality, and anticipating the health challenges of the 21st century.