A POSITIVE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT IS...

...a health care setting that supports excellence, and decent work conditions, and has the power to attract and retain staff, provide quality care and deliver cost-effective, people-centred health care services.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

About the global health workforce crisis

Achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is one of the targets the nations of the world set when adopting the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015.

UHC enables everyone to access the services that address the most significant causes of disease and death and ensures that the quality of those services is good enough to improve the health of the people who receive them.

However, there is a growing gap between the supply of health professionals – the people who work in the medical profession and provide health care treatment and advice – and the demand for their services. The World Health Organization estimates a shortage of 18 million health workers by 2030, leaving people with no access to health care. It also reports that countries at all levels of socioeconomic development face, to varying degrees, difficulties in the education, employment, deployment, retention, and performance of their workforce – while faced with the increasing burden of noncommunicable diseases, among other health related challenges.

How to address the global health workforce crisis

Health professionals are key to sustainable health systems, both now and for the future.

However, the poor quality of most healthcare work environments are undermining health service delivery and driving health professionals away from their caregiving role and country.

Unsafe working conditions are a feature of many health systems around the world. Unrealistic workloads, poorly equipped facilities, compromised personal safety and unfair compensation feature among the many factors affecting the work, life and practice of today's health professionals. Such environments weaken an employer's ability to offer enabling workplaces, and make it more difficult to attract, motivate and retain staff. These factors, when appropriately resourced, go a long way in ensuring an effective health professional workforce and, ultimately, the overall quality of health care delivery.



STAND UP FOR POSITIVE PRACTICE POSITIVE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENTS





UNDERSTANDING POSITIVE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENTS

Positive Practice Environments benefit everyone – patients, health professionals, employers and managers, and health care systems.

There are key elements in the workplace that have a direct positive impact on people's health outcomes and organisational costeffectiveness. Moreover, healthcare settings driven by people-centred care are considered to be more effective, cost-less, improve health literacy and patient engagement. The following are evidence-based characteristics of quality workplaces for quality care. The Positive Practice Environment checklist is intended for use by employers, professional organisations, regulatory bodies, government agencies as well as health sector professionals. It is designed as a reference tool to enable these groups to assess the quality of their practice environments, identify any deficiencies and develop strategies to address priority gaps. Each of these characteristics implies a set of rights and responsibilities for the concerned stakeholders, whether they be employers, employees or managers, public or private, governmental or nongovernmental. Mutual respect and consideration are basic components of the organisational climate that must be established and rigorously maintained.

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION AND EMPOWERMENT

To improve performance and build professional self-worth.

- **Recognise the full range of competencies** and skill-mix provided by health professionals and empower them for these competencies to be fully utilised.
- Promote professional autonomy and control over practice and pace of work.
- **Recognise and reward employee** contribution and performance.
- Regularly assess employee satisfaction.
- Act to empower health professionals to work within their knowledge and capacity to address the gaps left by workforce shortages.

STAND UP FOR POSITIVE PRACTICE POSITIVE PRACTICE POSITIVE PRACTICE

• Encourage interprofessional collaborative practices to deliver the highest quality of care across settings.



MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND INCENTIVES

To enable and encourage health workers to stay in their jobs, in their profession and in their countries.

- Commit to equal opportunity and fair treatment.
- **Provide adequate and timely compensation** commensurate with education, experience and professional responsibilities.
- Maintain effective performance management systems.
- Offer decent and flexible incentives and benefit packages.
- Involve employees in planning, governance and decision-making affecting their practice, work environment and patient care.
- Engage employees in continuous assessment and improvement of work design and work organisation.
- Encourage open communication, collegiality, teamwork and supportive relationships in health care settings and the community.

- Foster a culture of mutual trust, fairness and respect.
- Adopt policies and procedures that positively encourage the reporting of professional misconduct (such as harassment, violence, discrimination; and others), of inadequate processes within the healthcare system or violation of laws/regulations.
- Provide clear and comprehensive job descriptions/specifications.
- Promote transparency in decision-making processes (where applicable).
- Ensure effective grievance/complaints procedures are in place.
- Demonstrate effective management and leadership practices.
- Foster strong employment relationships between and among employer/employee/co-workers/patient.



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

To keep employees safe so they remain healthy, motivated and productive.

- Adhere to safe staffing levels.
- Adopt occupational health, safety and wellness policies and programmes that address workplace hazards, discrimination, physical and psychological violence and issues pertaining to personal security.
- Invest in health and work environments.
- Adhere to regulatory frameworks that ensure safe working conditions.
- Provide access to adequate equipment, supplies and support staff.
- Promote healthy work-life balance through policies and programmes that support fair and manageable workloads and job demands/stress, and flexible work arrangements.

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

To provide opportunities to learn, develop, progress and save lives.

- Support opportunities for professional training, development and career advancement.
- Offer thorough orientation programmes for new hires.
- Foster effective supervisory, mentoring and peer coaching programmes. contribution and performance.

• Promote awareness regarding cultural adaptability within staff and among employer/employee/co-workers/patient to foster a better working environment and outcome.

- Offer employment security and work predictability.
- Ensure employees practice under an overarching code of ethics.
- Communicate clearly and uphold standards of practice.
- Regularly review scopes of practice and competencies.



STAND UP FOR POSITIVE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENTS

The delivery of high-quality health services depends on the competence of health workers and a work environment that supports performance excellence. The ongoing under investment in the health sector has resulted in a deterioration of working conditions worldwide. This has had a serious negative impact on the recruitment and retention of health personnel, the productivity and performance of health facilities, and ultimately on patient outcomes. Positive Practice Environments must be established throughout the health sector if national and international health goals are to be met.

Let's join in commitment and action to create quality workplaces for quality care.



REFERENCES

Aiken, L. H., Clarke, S. P., Sloane, D. M., Lake, E. T., & Cheney, T. (2008). Effects of hospital care environment on patient mortality and nurse outcomes. The Journal of nursing administration, 38(5), 223-229. Aluttis C, Bishaw T, Frank MW. The workforce for health in a globalized context--global shortages and international migration. Glob Health Action. 2014 Feb 13;7:23611. Anand S, Bärnighausen T. Human resources and health outcomes: Cross-country econometric study. The Lancet 2004; 364: 1603-9. Campbell J, Buchan J, Cometto G, David B, Dussault G, Fogstad H, Fronteira I, Lozano R, Nyonator F, Pablos-Méndez A, Quain EE, Starrs A, Tangcharoensathien V. Human resources for health and universal health coverage: fostering equity and effective coverage. Bull World Health Organ. 2013 Nov 1;91(11):853-63. 10.2471/BLT.13.118729. PMID: 24347710; PMCID: PMC3853950. Coats D, Max C. Healthy work: productive workplaces Why the UK needs more "good jobs". The Work Foundation and the London Health Commission. 2005 December 1. Global Health Security Agenda. Workforce development action package. https://ghsagenda.org/home/action-packages/workforce-development/ (accessed 19 December 2019).

Jimba M, Cometto G, Yamamoto T, Shiao L, Huicho L, Sheikh M. Health workforce: the critical pathway to universal health coverage. Montreux: First Global Symposium on Health Systems Research; 2010.

http://healthsystemsresearch.org/hsr2010/images/stories/10health_workforce.pdf (accessed 19 December 2019). Kane RL, Shamliyan T, Mueller C, Duval S, Witt T (2007). Nursing Staffing and Quality of Patient Care. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research; 07-E005. WHO, Framework on integrated, people-centred health services. Geneva: World Health Organisation: 2016. http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA69/A69_39-en.pdf?ua=1 (accessed 19 December 2019).

WHO, Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance. World Health Organisation. 2015 https://www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/global-action-plan/en/, (accessed 19 December 2019).

WHO, Global Action Plan for the prevention and control of Noncommunicable diseases. World Health Organisation. 2013. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/94384/9789241506236_eng.pdf?se quence=1 (accessed 19 December 2019).

WHO, Global strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030. Geneva: World Health Organisation; 2016 (https://www.who.int/hrh/resources/pub_globstrathrh-2030/en/, (accessed 19 December 2019).

WHO, Universal health coverage (UHC) Factsheet. Geneva: World Health Organisation; 24 January 2019. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-(uhc)

(accessed 6 February 2020).

POSITIVE PRACTICE POSITIVE PRACTICE POSITIVE PRACTICE