

## World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA)



*Press Release*

### **Health Professions support the IPPPR's main report to invest in preparedness now and prevent the next crisis**

29 May 2021

Representing the world's dentists, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and physicians, the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA) supports findings and concrete actions listed in the [Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response](#) (IPPPR) report.

The report, being presented to the 74th session of the World Health Assembly this week, stresses the pressing need for significant reform of international and national systems to avoid future infectious disease pandemics and includes a checklist of urgent actions to drive the end of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that having a strong health workforce is key to supporting communities through any health emergency. As stated by the report, "[t]he agility with which countries were able to manage surge health workforce demands has been a key difference between successful and struggling responses."

Health professionals and care personnel were and continue to be severely affected by COVID-19, especially with the emergence of Long COVID as a long-term condition. Throughout the pandemic the five members of WHPA have been advocating for the rights, respect and support of health and care professionals. To that end, WHPA, with a combined membership of over 41 million health professionals globally, contributed to the report through facilitating the recruitment of health professionals, both working in the frontline and providing essential health services, to participate in focus group discussions. These discussions provided field insights and on-the-ground stories from health professionals from around the world and informed the outcomes of the report and IPPPR's background document "[Impact on essential health services](#)".

**WHPA believes that concrete action and ambitious financial commitments are required to help safeguard our underfunded, COVID-affected health systems. This is critical to ensuring the health, safety and retention of our essential workforce. We must do better to protect not only them but also their patients, families, communities, and the broader health of countries.**

As we represent health professionals on WHO's Steering Committee for The International Year of the Health and Care Workers, WHPA continues to call for real change to improve health systems through additional funding streams and coordinated efforts. Without a strong health workforce, patient safety is at risk and we are moving away from achieving Universal Health Coverage.

WHPA therefore ask policy makers, regulators, professional bodies, health facilities and communities to Stand Up for [Positive Practice Environments](#) and following [an expert discussion](#) hosted by WHPA, is calling on all countries to classify and treat COVID-19 as an occupational disease.

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The [World Health Professions Alliance \(WHPA\)](#) speaks for more than 41 million health care professionals worldwide, assembling essential knowledge and experience from the key health care professions in more than 130 countries.

WHPA was formed in 1999 and now brings together the global organizations representing the world's dentists, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and physicians. We work to facilitate collaboration among the health professions and major stakeholders such as governments and international organizations, including the World Health Organization. By working in collaboration, instead of along parallel tracks, patients and health care systems benefit.

Together, the partners of WHPA include more than 600 national member organizations, making us the key point of global access to health care professionals within the five disciplines.

[FDI World Dental Federation \(FDI\)](#) serves as the principal representative body for more than one million dentists worldwide with membership comprising of some 200 national dental associations in about 130 countries.

The [International Pharmaceutical Federation \(FIP\)](#) is the global federation of national organisations representing more than four million pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists and pharmaceutical educators around the world.

The [International Council of Nurses \(ICN\)](#) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations, representing the more than 27 million nurses worldwide.

[World Physiotherapy](#) is the sole international voice for physiotherapy, representing more than 660,000 physiotherapists worldwide through its 125 member organisations.

The [World Medical Association \(WMA\)](#) is an international organisation representing more than nine million physicians with its membership of 115 national medical associations.

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**'Stand Up For Positive Practice Environments'**, a campaign initiated by the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA), highlights the need for urgent action to address the global health workforce crisis; too many countries have desperate shortages of health professionals, impacting negatively on people's health outcomes and health worker well-being. The reasons are complex. A prevailing reason, however, is the poor quality of most healthcare work environments that are undermining health service delivery and driving health professionals away from their caregiving role and country.

Positive Practice Environments – health care settings that support excellence and decent work conditions – have been proven to have the power to attract and retain staff, provide quality patient care and strengthen the health sector as a whole. That's why WHPA's worldwide campaign is urging health professionals, managers, governments, policy and decision-makers, and community leaders, to 'Stand Up For Positive Practice Environments.'

[www.positivepracticeenvironments.org](http://www.positivepracticeenvironments.org)