



Statement published on the official website for the [Fifth Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety](#), Montreux 23-24 Feb 2023

## Health workforce safety is patient safety

Providing a decent, safe working environment for health professionals is an integral part of the strong safety culture needed to reduce patient harm. Risks to the health and safety of the health professionals providing care can lead to risks for patients, patient harm and adverse patient outcomes.

Many health systems and facilities were already under strain when Covid-19 hit. The pandemic has exacerbated existing staff shortages, burnout and violence against health professionals. As a consequence, health professionals are more than ever in need of positive practice environments to ensure that neither staff nor patients are harmed in the delivery of health care.

[Positive practice environments](#)<sup>1</sup> are health care settings that provide decent work conditions, and have the power to attract and retain staff, provide quality care and deliver cost-effective, people-centred health care services. One essential element is good occupational safety and health provision—including safe staffing levels, access to equipment, work-life balance and job security—but it goes beyond that. Health professionals need opportunities for education and information to learn, develop, progress and save lives. And professional recognition and empowerment are needed to improve performance and build professional self-worth.

As the host of the summit and President of the Swiss Confederation Alain Berset puts it, the relevant measures for improvement are well known. To help bridge the implementation gap, civil society and professional associations must be involved at all levels of consultation and decision making which aim to keep patients and the health workforce safe.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://whpa.org/activities/positive-practice-environments>

