

April – June 2023 WHO Theme: Health for All

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UNIVERSAL HEALTH

Universal health coverage depicts the favored goal that people globally obtain health services in a manner without having to risk financial hardship as well as providing equal opportunities to raise their voices and make visible the situation of individuals, families, and communities that still lack access and coverage to essential, comprehensive and quality health services, based on primary healthcare.¹

HEALTH AND THE GLOBAL CONCERN

The pandemic revealed the interdependence between the economic performance of countries and the protection of the health of populations, thereby confirming that there is no sustainable economic growth without protecting and promoting health and well-being and vice versa.² The social and economic crisis characterized by the increase in unemployment, impoverishment, and the exacerbation of long-standing inequities drives home the need for the articulation of the contributions of different sectors of activity and government for recovery and transformation of the health systems of the Region towards fostering Universal Health, and more importantly towards more equitable and resilient societies.³

HEALTH EQUITY

Social justice indicates the absence of avoidable, unfair, and remediable to groups of people with their social, economic, and demographic status.⁴ Health equity emphasizes the health status and outcomes among groups at biological, social, and economic levels that create and recreate differences in access to health.⁵

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH FUNCTIONS

Public health in the region confronts new challenges such as the reemergence of infectious diseases and changes in political, social, and economic aspects that determine the health and health equity of the population. These challenges are related to weaknesses in health systems, health challenges, and health authorities at all institutional levels and together with civil society level. The health policy cycle plays a pivotal role in assessing the health status of the communities in the light of health-poor status, allocating the necessary resources, and guaranteeing access to all public health interventions and services.⁶

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PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

A health system based on primary healthcare orients its structures and functions toward the tenets of equity and social solidarity and the right of human beings to attain standards of health without distinction of other parameters such as race, religion, political, belief, economic and social condition. The principles required to sustain such a system are its capacity to respond equitably and efficiently to the health needs of citizens, including the ability to monitor progress for continuous improvement and renewal; the responsibility and accountability of governments; sustainability; participation; an orientation toward the highest standards of quality and safety; and intersectoral action.⁷

NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDs)

The term NCDs refers to a group of conditions that are not mainly caused by an acute infection, result in long-term health consequences, and often create a need for long-term treatment and care. These conditions include cancers, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and chronic lung illnesses. Many NCDs can be prevented by reducing common risk factors such as tobacco use, abuse of alcohol, sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy eating habits and diets. Several other important conditions are also considered as NCDs, including injuries and mental health disorders. The healthcare services organization promotes, coordinates, and implements technical cooperation activities directed to the prevention and control of NCDs.⁸

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is a “state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”. Mental disorders and psychoactive substance-related disorders are highly prevalent throughout the world and are major contributors to morbidity, disability, and premature mortality. The development and establishment of policies and programs for mental health promotion and prevention are a necessary part of regional efforts to improve mental health in the overall population.⁹

RESPONSIBILITY OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN HEALTH FOR ALL

The healthcare professionals can take down the main role in observing this special day to create awareness among public about the value of good health. Not only physical but taking care of the mental and emotional health of a person is equally important and draw people’s attention toward complete well-being. The movement of healthcare action reflects on the state of global health and how we can work together to improve it. This year, the theme denotes a journey to achieve Health for All. Hence, everyone deserves access to quality healthcare, no matter who they are or where they live.¹⁰ This central theme would be the harbinger of hope and succor to many a needy and deserving world citizen and for many more years to come.

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