

*Family doctors: the heart of health care*

17 May 2023, Cairo – On 19 May 2023, WHO joins the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) and Member States in celebrating World Family Doctor Day.

Family doctors play a crucial role in promoting the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Their dedication, compassion and expertise make them the heart of health care, and a trusted source of support for patients and families.

Family practice is a pivotal element of WHO's vision of health for all by all and health care efforts to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Enhancing and scaling up a fit-for-purpose, fit-to-practice health workforce, including family doctors, is the fourth of 7 regional priorities to build resilient health systems in the Region.

The shortage of family practitioners worldwide, and especially in many countries of the Region, is a key challenge to implementing primary health care (PHC)-based models of care.

"We are also working to tackle the shortage of trained family practitioners. This is a key challenge. Only 700 family practitioners graduate each year in the Region, against an estimated need for 21 000 new practitioners per year to reach our regional target of 3 family physicians per 10 000 population by 2030," said Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari in his statement for World Family Doctor Day, 2022.

The Regional Office's PHC team is working to support family physicians in the Region. The most recent initiative is the launching of the Regional Professional Diploma in Family Medicine. The diploma aims to contribute to bridging this gap by building future capacities in public health and community medicine, and ultimately contributing to improving health system resilience in the Region.

On 19 May, let's honour and appreciate the tireless efforts of family doctors and primary care

teams in improving health care outcomes and creating healthier communities worldwide.

**Related link**

[Read more about World Family Doctors Day](#)

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