

23 September 2021 ¹ – The current complex crisis has heavily impacted the health system in Lebanon, decreasing availability, affordability, accessibility and quality of health care in general, and threatening the sustainability and resilience of the health system.

Due to the severe financial and fuel crisis, most hospitals are currently operating at 50% capacity; only lifesaving hospital interventions are being prioritized. Primary health care centres are rationing fuel consumption by reducing opening hours, and more than 600 private pharmacies are temporarily closed.

It is estimated that around 15–17% out of 20 000 registered nurses have left the country over the past 12 months, while more than 1000 have been laid off. Around 40% of medical doctors (mainly specialists) have permanently emigrated or are working on a part-time basis outside of the country. It is estimated that the Ministry of Public Health will need to cover health care for at least 70% of the population (compared to 48% prior to the current crisis) as unemployment and poverty are rising. The Government's fiscal and financial situation has resulted in unpaid bills to both private and public health sectors, threatening the sustainability of health services, and increasing health financial hardship on vulnerable populations. ²

WHO will continue to support the Ministry of Public Health and people of Lebanon by:

1. Filling acute gaps in medications: more than 550 000 patients are receiving acute and chronic treatment.
2. Maintaining access to essential health care through its support to 12 public hospitals with equipment, supplies, recruitment of more than 620 nursing staff, training and reimbursement of intensive care for uninsured vulnerable individuals, contributing towards the doubling of public sector hospitalization capacity.
3. Bridge humanitarian support towards sustainable development, including integration of primary health packages of care.
4. Adopt innovative approaches during the COVID-19 response where selected major public hospitals have been twinned with private academic hospitals aiming at improving and standardizing COVID-19 and critical care practices. ³

WHO remains committed to continuing our immediate, lifesaving work in Lebanon, while also planning for longer term strategies for health. We count on the support of all stakeholders, so that together, we can take Lebanon from its current crisis to a future in which all Lebanese can enjoy health as a basic human right.

Related link

[Statement by WHO Regional Director at WHO press briefing on Afghanistan and Lebanon](#)

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