



**Speak up**  
for health worker safety!



15 September 2020, Cairo □ World Patient Safety Day is celebrated each year on 17 September and the theme of this year's day is "Health worker safety: a priority for patient safety".

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted huge global challenges and has only increased the daily risks faced by health workers in delivering essential health care services to patients – infection, accidents, violence, illness and even death. It has also increased risks for patients accessing essential health services. This year’s World Patient Safety Day aims to raise global awareness about the importance of ensuring health worker safety and its interlinkages with patient safety, hence the slogan of this year’s campaign “Safe health workers, safe patients”. All stakeholders are urged to invest in the safety of health workers, not only government but policy-makers, academia, the private sector, patients, families, communities and the wider public.

"It is crucial that we recognize the professionalism and dedication of health workers and invest greater resources to protect them from the occupational risks they face in the workplace. Months into this pandemic we still see countries facing challenges in procuring adequate personal protective equipment for health workers and increasing testing capacity, which is impeding early detection, isolation of cases and tracing of contacts. This is placing health workers at unnecessary risk of infection, especially as we know that a large number of people infected with COVID-19 are asymptomatic," said Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. "Training on infection prevention and control measures is needed for those working on the frontlines of this pandemic, coupled with supportive measures to enhance compliance of these measures in the workplace."

Policy-makers need to take necessary actions to formulate, update and implement policies and legislation to create a safer environment for health workers, and health leaders need to promote an open and transparent culture of safety in which incidents are promptly reported and staff receive appropriate training on infection prevention and control. Academics can contribute through generating evidence on health worker safety and patient safety to inform standards of practice, and to incorporate health worker safety and patient safety into educational curricula and continuing professional development.

WHO asks patients, their families, caregivers, communities and the wider public to raise their safety concerns and support protection for health care workers. Professional associations and international organizations are urged to speak up against unsafe working conditions and violence against health workers, and to conduct capacity-building to promote safety and assist in implementing safety standards.

This year on World Patient Safety Day, WHO is calling for collective action to support and promote health worker safety as a priority for patient safety. This call for collective action is aligned with the regional vision of “Health for All by All – Speak up for health worker safety!”

**Related link**

[World Patient Safety Day campaign page](#)

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