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In 1948, the World Health Organization formulated its definition of health as:

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (WHO Constitution 1948)

The health of individuals is affected by a wide range of factors – individual characteristics and behaviours, the physical and social environment, income levels, events that impact our lives – and so WHO wants to learn more about the public’s perception of health given the changing demography of populations and the nature of disease, increased life expectancy and advances in health care since its original definition formulated in 1948.

WHO is inviting members of the public to reflect on their concept of health and submit a short 60-word narrative outlining what health means to them, or in other words, how do they define health.

Who can participate?

Participation is open to all and submissions from youth are particularly encouraged.

Submissions must be the original work of the author and previously unpublished. Innovative and creative definitions are encouraged.

Why 60 words?

WHO is requesting submissions of only 60 words to celebrate the Sixtieth session of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, which will take place in October.

The work of WHO at the regional level is governed by the Regional Committee.

Regional Committee sessions are attended by Ministers of Health and other high-level officials and WHO intends to display the submissions of entrants during the meeting in order to raise their awareness of the public’s changing perceptions of health. Submissions will also be posted on the WHO Regional Office web site and may be used in WHO advocacy products.

Award for creative submissions

A WHO panel will choose five submissions for their creativity and originality, and each will be awarded US\$ 200.

The deadline for submissions is Monday 30 September 2013.

Only online submissions in Arabic, English or French can be accepted.

[Questions and answers](#)

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