

5 December 2015 -- As people and communities around the world celebrate Patient Solidarity Day, on 5 December, under the theme 'health care as a human right', countries are being reminded that health care is a fundamental human right and that everyone should have fair and equitable access to good quality health services, wherever they are and whatever their circumstances.

The World Health Organization (WHO) stresses that the right of every person to the highest attainable standard of health means that decision-makers in each country have the obligation to make sure that the rights of patients are respected, protected and fulfilled at all levels of health care. Health institutions should deliver affordable, good quality health care services that meet the needs of patients without fear of discrimination.

"Many health care systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Region are under pressure to serve millions of refugees and displaced people who have been forced to leave their homes because of armed conflicts," says Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. "The most important challenges facing countries in our region are the limited access to good quality, affordable health care services. Governments must develop and implement clear strategies to reach universal health coverage – eliminating inequity, reducing the cost of health services and improving their quality," he said.

Patient Solidarity Day is an occasion to discuss common problems in providing health care coverage for all and to search for appropriate solutions to ensure fair and impartial access to quality health care worldwide.

A move away from disease-centred health care systems towards integrated people-centred services provides a way forward. This model is based on a respectful relationship between patients and health workers including good communication, shared knowledge as well as appropriate working hours and waiting times.

For more information

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