

6 June 2020 – WHO is supporting Pakistan's Ministry of Health Services, Regulation and Coordination in the development and roll-out of the nation's We Care campaign to protect frontline health care workers currently engaged in the COVID-19 pandemic response. The campaign was launched by the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Zafar Mirza at a ceremony held at the National Command and Control Centre in Islamabad recently.

According to remarks made by Dr Mirza at the launch, the campaign is designed to protect frontline health care workers from the risk of infection by improving their adherence to, and understanding of, infection, prevention and control (IPC) guidelines through awareness-building trainings. In collaboration with the National Health Services Academy over 100 000 frontline workers will be trained. The training will focus on building health care workers' knowledge to be up to date with current standards for the proper usage of personal protective equipment (PPE) within various settings in health care facilities.

All awareness-building training will be carried out virtually, especially due to the imposition of lockdowns in several parts of the country and the adoption of stringent social distancing measures in public spaces and work settings. The campaign will also link PPE supplies to hospitals and health care facilities in need and provide counselling and stress management services to health care workers via a telehealth portal.

As the lead technical agency supporting the Government of Pakistan's COVID-19 response, WHO worked alongside the National Health Services Academy to develop the virtual training for up to 100 000 healthcare workers on the use of PPEs, critical care and IPC guidelines. To maximize impact the training materials were completely adapted to the local context, made interactive and included demonstration videos to amplify key learning goals.

WHO Representative Dr Palitha Mahipala emphasized that "We Care is a great initiative to protect the nation's health care workers who are working at the forefront of this crisis. They are the true heroes fighting the virus head on and that is why it is critical to protect, empower and enable them. WHO is therefore wholly committed to extending all necessary support to Pakistan's health care workers and facilities through this essential campaign."

To date, up to 1500 workers have been trained on IPC guidelines through virtual trainings provided by WHO and the National Health Services Academy. This training builds on Pakistan's

first endorsed National Guidelines on Infection Prevention and Control, developed in close collaboration with WHO and launched on 22 May 2020. WHO is dedicated to supporting the Government of Pakistan in improving IPC measures nationwide.

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