

Health Professionals Are Essential to Safe Care, Strong Economies and Resilient Health Systems

Geneva, Switzerland: 1 April 2026—As World Health Worker Week begins, global health leaders are emphasizing a clear and urgent message: investing specifically in health professionals means stronger health systems, healthier populations, and more resilient economies. Investing in health professionals is not a cost—it is one of the highest-return and most critical public investments governments can make.

Health professionals make up over 75% of the global health workforce, yet their distinct contributions can be overlooked or diluted. Health professionals' advanced education, rigorous regulation, and high degree of autonomy in clinical decision-making—often involving life-and-death judgments—set them apart. This combination of accredited expertise, ethical obligation, regulated practice, and independent clinical judgement is essential to ensuring patient safety and high-quality care.

When health professionals are undervalued or in short supply, the consequences are immediate and serious: delays in diagnosis and treatment, reduced continuity of care, increased risks to patient safety, and declining trust in health systems. Equally important is the depth of their relationships with patients and communities, which underpins trust, continuity of care, and improved health outcomes.

Unique value of health professionals

At a time when some narratives risk grouping all health workers together in ways that obscure these critical differences, the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA) is using this week to make a bold and unified statement: the unique value of health professionals must be recognized, protected, and strengthened. Health professionals are indispensable to safe, effective, and trusted care—and health systems cannot function without them.

“At some point in all our lives, we will depend on a healthcare professional—for their expert knowledge, their judgement, their care and their compassion. Such a large part of the global health workforce is health professionals, and we trust them with our lives and those of the people we love. What they provide is truly priceless, but it is only possible if we invest in their education, support and wellbeing,” said Howard Catton, Chair of WHPA and CEO of the International Council of Nurses.

Interprofessional campaign for World Health Worker Week: 1-7 April

To mark World Health Worker Week, WHPA and its member organizations are launching a coordinated, week-long social media campaign, running 1-7 April. [The campaign](#) will highlight the expertise, leadership, and impact of health professionals worldwide and call for investments in workplace safety and the health and well-being of health professionals. It is also a living demonstration of interprofessional collaboration in action. Member organizations will support one another by amplifying shared messages and showcasing collective advocacy.

The campaign features a [keynote video message](#) from WHPA Chair and CEO of the International Council of Nurses, Howard Catton, alongside a series of videos by senior leaders from across the global health professional associations, representing dentists, pharmacists, nurses, physicians, and physiotherapists. These leaders will share perspectives on the added value health professionals bring to individuals, communities, and health systems, emphasizing two central messages:

- Strong health systems depend on empowered, well-supported professionals working in decent and safe conditions.
- Investing in their education, regulation, and workplace safety as well as health and well-being is fundamental to delivering safe care, improving outcomes, and strengthening system resilience, and can unlock significant social and economic returns.

Note for Editors

The World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA) brings together the global organizations representing the world's dentists, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and physicians and speaks for over 47 million health care professionals in more than 179 countries and territories. The WHPA works to improve global health and the quality of patient care and facilitates collaboration among the health professions and major stakeholders.

www.whpa.org

Press contact

Joannah Caborn Wengler, Manager of the WHPA Secretariat

jcwengler@whpa.org

+41 22 560 8147

[END]