

Investing in Health Professionals Strengthens Economies and Patient Care, Says WHPA

Geneva, Switzerland: 19 May 2026—Investing in health professionals is fundamental to economic stability and sustainable development, and stronger health systems, according to leaders of the global health professions gathered at a side event hosted by the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA) on Tuesday 19 May, during the 79th World Health Assembly in Geneva.

The event, titled “*Health Is Wealth: Why Investing in Health Professionals Pays Off*,” brought together global health leaders to reframe the narrative: health expenditure should not be viewed as a burden, but as a strategic investment that delivers measurable economic and social returns.

Global health stakeholders at the event also heard early career perspectives underscoring how the future of healthcare will be shaped by the quality of the work environments and the support provided to the next generation entering the profession today.

“The evidence is there: Where we have higher health workforce density, we have longer life expectancy, improved productivity, and sustained economic growth,” said Howard Catton, Chair of WHPA and CEO of the International Council of Nurses. “Roughly 75% of the global health workforce is made up of health professionals. The professions need to work together to ensure that national and global health agendas prioritize strategic investment in health professionals which will ensure decent working conditions, high-quality care and reduced health system costs. Investment in health professionals is not only a best buy for global health, it is priceless.”

At the World Health Assembly this week, WHPA is calling on WHO member states to adopt the draft [Strategy on the Economics of Health for All](#), which sets out a transformative approach to building economies that deliver health and well-being for all. An economy of health for all is impossible without sustained, strategic investment in the people who deliver health, WHPA will say.

Panel speakers:

Mike Landry	President, World Physiotherapy
José Luis Cobos Serrano	President, ICN
Jenny Gallagher	President of IADR*, representing FDI
Virginia Olmos	Vice President, FIP
Jacqueline Kitulu	President, WMA

*International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research

Early career perspective speakers:

Pascale Mathieu	President of the French National Council of Physiotherapists
Josephine Agyei Committee	Chair of the ICN Alliance of Student and Early Career Nurses Steering
Mohamed Osman	Junior Doctors Network (WMA)
Yifan Zhou Coordinator (FIP)	Early Career Pharmaceutical Group (ECPG) External Relations

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

The [World Health Assembly](#) is the decision-making body of WHO. It convenes annually in May, bringing together delegations from WHO’s 194 Member States, United Nations agencies, international organizations, as well as non-State actors in official relations with WHO. WHPA’s members are all in official relations with WHO.

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