



Statement to the agenda item 11.5 “Primary health care towards universal health coverage” of the 72nd World Health Assembly from 20–28 May 2019

The International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM), the World Confederation of Physical Therapy (WCPT), Humanity and Inclusion (HI), International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO), the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrists (IALP) and The World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) supported by the Global Rehabilitation Alliance (GRA) strongly support Universal health coverage in Primary health care (PHC) and Community health workers.

The Astana Conference affirms that strengthening PHC is the most inclusive, effective, efficient approach to improve people's health and well-being; promotion, prevention, care, rehabilitation, palliative care must be accessible to all¹.

Rehabilitation aims to optimize functioning of persons experiencing disability². Rehabilitation needs are increasing due to ageing, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), chronicity, injuries. Disability-adjusted life years lost to NCDs are growing; violent conflicts, natural disasters, and large population migrations³, are re-shaping the global health landscape.

People with disabling health conditions have the greatest difficulty in accessing health services. Basic rehabilitation services, assistive technology and long-term follow-up should be reachable for people experiencing disability but rehabilitation professionals in PHC are scarce in most countries.

We strongly support the WHO initiative Rehabilitation in Health Systems,⁴ “Rehabilitation 2030: A Call for Action”,⁵ “Access to rehabilitation in primary health care: an ongoing challenge”⁶

We urge WHO and member states to:

1. Acknowledge the need to include rehabilitation in PHC, and to expand, decentralize rehabilitation services' delivery and make them available to everyone.
2. Work specifically to train PHC professionals in providing basic rehabilitation services, to identify rehabilitation needs.

¹ Global Conference on Primary Health Care. Astana Kazakhstan 2018.

² Stucki G1, Pollock A, Engkasan J, Selb M. How to use the ICF as a reference system for comparative evaluation and standardised reporting of rehabilitation interventions. Eur J Phys Rehabil Med. 2019 Apr 15. doi: 10.23736/S1973-9087.19.05808-8. [Epub ahead of print]

³ (Documents A72/12) Universal health coverage. Primary health care towards universal health coverage Report by the Director-General

⁴ Rehabilitation in Health systems, World Health Organization 2017. Available from https://www.who.int/disabilities/brochure_EN_2.pdf?ua=1 (last visited 26th March)

⁵ Krug E, Cieza A. Strengthening health systems to provide rehabilitation services. Bull World Health Organ. 2017 Mar 1; 95(3): 167.

⁶ WHO. Access to rehabilitation in primary health care: an ongoing challenge. Working Draft

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