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**CONTACT: Laura Hoemeke, +1-919-360-7799**

[lhoemeke@intrahealth.org](mailto:lhoemeke@intrahealth.org)

## **HWAI Celebrates the First World Health Worker Week: Advocating for a Healthier World**

The [Health Workforce Advocacy Initiative](#) (HWAI) joins in celebrating the first [World Health Worker Week](#), April 8 to 12, 2013.

World Health Worker Week is being held to mobilize communities, partners and policy makers in support of health workers and to celebrate the lifesaving work they do. The week is designed to bring attention to gaps in the health workforce by calling on those in power to ensure that health workers have the training, supplies and support they need to do their jobs effectively.

Louise Holly, Chair of the HWAI network said, "While we already have days to celebrate the work of doctors, nurses and midwives, World Health Worker Week gives us an opportunity to celebrate the important work of *all* health workers—including those frontline health workers who are the first point of care for so many people around the world." Despite advances in medicine, many people, particularly the poorest and those living in rural areas, continue to suffer needlessly from preventable and easily treatable diseases because they don't have access to a skilled health worker.

Holly added, "The WHO estimates that around 4 million more health workers are needed globally. We need urgent action to fill this gap and to make sure that health workers are properly supported to provide needed prevention, treatment and health education to communities."

World Health Worker Week marks the beginning of a larger global movement to increase awareness on health workforce issues. The Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA) is supporting the week in advance of launching the 'Health Workers Count' campaign during the World Health Assembly in May 2013. The campaign will build momentum and elicit new commitments leading up to a major global health conference in November. The Third Global Forum on Human Resources for Health, which will be held in November 2013 in Recife, Brazil, is co-hosted by GHWA and the Government of Brazil. HWAI and other civil society partners is leveraging the conference to mobilize action for increased strategic investment in health workforce strengthening efforts toward meeting the 2015 millennium development goals and the larger goal of universal health coverage.

HWAI is an international network of civil society, health workers and others committed to addressing the global health workforce crisis, a fundamental barrier to achieving universal health coverage. HWAI serves as a platform for sharing knowledge and developing joint positions and activities related to advocacy for health workers, and also seeks to empower health workers themselves to become advocates. The HWAI Secretariat is managed by [AMREF](#) and [IntraHealth International](#).

HWAI focuses on supporting WHO's Code of Practice, promoting task shifting and sharing, advocating for human resources for health mainstreaming, and encouraging more financing for the global health workforce. During the past five years, the HWAI network has played a key role in increasing attention and resources globally for human resources for health. For more information visit [www.hwai.org](http://www.hwai.org).