Health Workforce in the COVID-19 Response

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COVID-19: Health Workforce Action

- Promoting hygiene
- Testing
- Contact tracing
- Referral
- Treating
- Dispensing medicines
- Home Care
- IPC
- Mental health
- Managing response
Impact of COVID-19 on health workers

- Increased workload, leading to the shortages
- High risk for contracting infection
- Need for updated knowledge, skills
- Fatigue and psychosocial stress
- Violence and stigma against health workers
Addressing health workforce challenges

Introduce policy enablers for health workforce management in the context of COVID-19 response

- Individual health workers
- Organizational environment
- System-wide level
Mobilize health workers to improve health workforce availability

**Individual Level**
- Organization of care delivery pathways to optimize roles, type of worker, team composition

**Organizational level**
- Repurpose, reassign and deploy existing staff
- Anticipate health workers absenteeism due to illness or quarantine in planning

**System Level**
- Analyse the existing health workforce and identify shortages in all areas
- Mobilize the surge capacity and inactive health workforce
- Introduce different contractual modalities
- Ensure financial resources for mobilization of additional staff and incentives
- Engage and train community emergency volunteers
- Mobilize emergency medical teams when necessary
Surge capacity planning tools

- **Adaptt Surge Planning Support Tool**
  -> for high-level policy makers with at-a-glance approach

- **Essential Supplies Forecasting Tool**
  -> For planners at national, regional levels

- **COVID-19 Workforce estimator**
  -> for planners at national, regional, facility levels
Enable and optimize health workers to deliver services effectively and efficiently

**Individual Level**

- Brief health workers on their rights, roles and responsibilities, including occupational safety and health, during the COVID-19 outbreak
- Building **competencies** through education and retraining/upskilling in management of COVID-19 cases, including IPC
- Explore **innovative approaches** to providing accelerated training for overloaded health workers
- **Team based mentoring**

**Organizational Level**

- Ensure that health workers have **decent working environment** and **adequate supplies**
- Rationalizing the health workforce distribution

**System Level**

- Develop and disseminate updated **technical guidelines**
- Engage stakeholders
Protect health workers safety

**Individual Level**

- Establish protocols to assure self isolation and the safe return to work of health workers
- Provide **training** to health workers on infection control and use of PPE
- Review the division of labour and reassign **health workers with high risk**

**Organizational Level**

- Perform **regular risk assessments** for health workers
- Develop **surveillance protocols** for health workers at risk of infection
- Ensure the availability of **adequate PPE** with high risk
- Plan services and interventions in such a way to and limit health worker exposure

**System Level**

- **Strengthen IPC programmes**
- Introduce new modalities for maintaining health services, such as telemedicine
Maintain the wellbeing and mental health of health workers

**Individual Level**

- Develop mechanisms and protocols to monitor illness, stress and burnout among health workers
- Provide security, as well as take broader measures that prevent social discrimination, violence, attacks, harassment, stigma and abuse against health workers

**Organizational Level**

- Ensure appropriate working hours with adequate rest and recuperation time and provide adequate rest facilities
- Provide psychosocial support to staff and their families including a hotline for support
- Reduce health worker burdens ensuring a manageable workload (rotation, compulsory breaks, monitoring working hours)

**System Level**

- Measures to reduce the travelling time, dedicated accommodation facilities, transportation, child care during the outbreak.
Governance and Leadership

- **Recognize and appreciate** the efforts and achievements of health workers
- Introduce necessary fast track, **regulatory mechanisms** for mobilized health workers of COVID-19 and practice indemnity
- Strengthen **information systems** for decision support. Include data on health worker infections and fatalities for in-course IPC and PPE correction, contact tracing, and decision-making
- Underscore health system linkage to health workers delivering **essential services** and COVID-19 roles in communities including supply, referral & supervision
We pay tribute to all nurses, midwives and all health workers

Thank you
Resources in addressing health workforce challenges during COVID-19


- EMRO Interim Guidance Note on Health Workforce Response to COVID-19


- Surge planning tools

- Guidance for health workers

- WHO Academy mobile app

- Addressing Social Stigma

- Coping with stress during COVID-19 outbreak

- Mental Health and Psychosocial Aspects of COVID-19