Chapter 2
About this document

Recognizing the global gap in understanding, measuring and improving quality of health care services, WHO, OECD and the World Bank have joined efforts to produce this document – Delivering quality health services: a global imperative for universal health coverage.

2.1 OBJECTIVES
This document has been developed with the following objectives:

- to provide governments with a description of the quality of health services and their importance to achieving broad public health goals, within the context of universal health coverage;
- to provide governments with a picture of evidence-based approaches that can ensure and improve quality of health services;
- to make a call for action at national and international levels.

2.2 SCOPE
This document is intended for policy-makers who want to bring the fundamentals of health care quality improvement into their health systems. Therefore, it looks at the quality of health care services at the foundation. The document does not aim to provide technical guidance for front-line health care professionals, though they may find useful information herein. Nor does it examine the implications of quality for specific technical areas.

2.3 CONTENT
The document begins with a chapter on the background to quality in health care services (Chapter 1), followed by a brief description of the document (Chapter 2). The main body of the publication comprises three chapters on key quality themes (Chapters 3–5), followed by a quality call to action in Chapter 6.

- **Chapter 3: Global state of health care quality.** In this chapter a global picture of quality in health care services is provided. Data are presented to show that quality of care in most countries, particularly low- and middle-income countries, is suboptimal, and improvement in quality is associated with better health outcomes.

- **Chapter 4: Building quality into the foundations of health systems.** This chapter describes how mechanisms to assure, monitor and continually improve quality must be built into the foundations of health systems, and addresses key issues that require attention to improve the quality of health care at country level.

- **Chapter 5: Understanding levers to improve quality.** Quality is a complex and multifaceted concept that requires the design and simultaneous deployment of combinations of discrete interventions. This chapter highlights the importance of driving quality improvement through national policy and strategy and presents a range of levers for quality improvement.

- **Chapter 6: The quality call to action.** A quality call to action is put forward to health policy-makers seeking to achieve the goal of access to high-quality, people-centred health services for all. This is offered with a sense of urgency, for if we do not act now, achievement of public health goals will be at stake.
Those chapters are followed by an annex, which provides a set of improvement interventions that have been selected for their potential impact on quality by reducing harm, improving front-line delivery of health care services, and building systemwide capacity for quality improvement. The illustrative interventions point to some of the options and possibilities available to health system leaders, managers, practitioners or policy-makers intent on advancing quality of care.