World Health Assembly Simulation 2023
Committee C Theme

Guidelines Universal Health Coverage – Reorienting Health Systems to Primary Health Care

Reorienting Health Systems towards Primary Health Care: The Key to Achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is the goal of ensuring that all people have access to the health services they need, without suffering financial hardship. Achieving UHC requires a reorientation of health systems towards primary health care (PHC), which is the first point of contact for people with health concerns and is delivered through a comprehensive and integrated approach. A strong PHC system is essential for ensuring that people can access the health services they need, regardless of where they live or their socioeconomic status. In the context of global health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, a PHC-oriented health system is critical for building global solidarity and responding effectively to the crisis. PHC can provide essential health services, including preventive care, diagnosis, treatment, and referral to higher levels of care when needed. It also plays a crucial role in surveillance, outbreak detection, and response, which are key components of the global health security agenda.

Resources:

1. World Health Organization (WHO) factsheet on universal health coverage: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-(uhc)
2. Video by the World Health Organization (WHO) explaining what Universal Health Coverage means: https://www.who.int/multi-media/details/universal-health-coverage---what-does-it-mean

Theme Guide Agenda for May 1st

Opening Session: *Building A Resilient Health Workforce for Primary Health Care*
Topic: Health Workforce

Building the capacity of the health workforce to deliver PHC services during crises is critical to ensuring that people have access to essential health care services, especially during emergency or disastrous situations. This requires various stakeholders to work collaboratively and enhance partnership capacity in establishing effective measures for training, recruitment, and retention.

Key Themes:

1. **Training:** is critical to ensure that health workers have the necessary skills and knowledge to respond effectively during emergencies or disaster situations.
2. **Recruitment:** is critical to ensure that healthcare workers have enough human resources to delegate, respond, and provide appropriate care during emergencies and disasters.
3. **Retention:** is critical to ensure that healthcare workers remain in their positions long enough to acquire the necessary experience and skills to provide effective care during emergencies and disasters, as well as to maintain the continuity of care during other unforeseen circumstances.

Guiding Questions:

1. How do stakeholders involved in increasing capacity develop effective training programs for health workers?
2. What policies and strategies can be developed and implemented to ensure the retention of health care workers in their positions?
3. In developing contingency plans for emergency and disaster situations, how can we ensure that both rural and urban areas have access to health resources to meet their needs?

Resources:

- Increase access to healthcare workers in rural and urban areas: https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/44369
- https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/326106
- "Strategies for improving health worker retention in rural and remote areas: a review of the literature," https://human-resources-health.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12960-021-00643-7
- "Policies and strategies to improve retention of health workers in underserved areas: a narrative review," https://www.scielosp.org/pdf/bwho/v88n5/v88n5a16.pdf

Interim Session: *Refocusing on intersectoral Collaboration for improved Health Outcome*

Topic: Intersectoral Collaboration

This involves promoting collaboration across different sectors to address the social determinants of health and support the delivery of PHC services during crises. An empowered public sector founded on ideals of fairness, participation, and intersectoral collaboration underpins action on the social determinants of health and health equity. This will entail strengthening the core functions of government and public institutions at the national and sub-national levels, especially in terms of policy coherence, participatory governance, planning, regulatory development and enforcement, and standard setting.

Key Themes:

1. **Policy coherence across government**—Place responsibility for health and health equality action at the highest level of government and ensure that it is considered in all ministerial and departmental policymaking. Ministers of health can help bring about worldwide change; they will be critical in gaining support from the head of state and other ministries.
2. **Strengthening action for equity**—Commit to the progressive development of universal health-care services; establish underserved communities access to government policy-making tables; improve rural livelihoods, investment in infrastructure, services, full employment and decent labour policy & programs; work toward the universal provision of vital social determinants of health services and programs.
3. **Measurement, evaluation, and training**—Build capacity to use health equity impact assessment as a standard protocol in all major policymaking; ensure training of practitioners and policymakers on social determinants of health; and raise public awareness of social determinants of health.

Guiding questions:

1. How can the SDGs framework be effectively used as a guide to ensure the achievement of high standards of health outcomes?
2. What are the metrics used to ensure the selection and participation of community members during policy and program implementation?
3. What mechanisms and commitments the private and public sector as well as NGOs should implement to achieve improved health outcome?

Resources:

- Intersectorality and Health: http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/jech-2021-217647
- Intersectorality and multisectoral approach: https://health-policy-systems.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12961-022-00826-1
- Intersectoral action for health equity: a rapid systematic review: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/43943/97892?sequence=1
- Improving health and well-being, Mapping of WHO European Region: https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/341715

Theme Guide Agenda for May 2nd

Transition Session: ***From Good Governance to Actionable Recommendations***
Topic: Health Governance

Ensuring good governance and leadership is critical to supporting health systems' reorientation toward PHC during crises. Such reorientation seeks to empower decision-makers, foster multi-stakeholder collaboration, improve the accountability, responsiveness, and transparency of health systems, and may include strengthening regulatory frameworks. Implementing strong strategic policy frameworks, information collection, and surveillance mechanisms is key for achieving UHC.

Key Themes:

1. **Coalition-building & Stakeholder Engagement: E**nsuring civil society engagement and civic participation is a crucial aspect to strengthening health systems and providing good health governance.
2. **Regulatory Policies & Frameworks:** Designing and implementing robust and effective regulatory mechanisms for the purposes of data collection, quality inspection, and delivery improvement is critical for creating a sustainable health system.
3. **Accountability, transparency & responsiveness mechanisms:** Implementing mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and responsiveness for intergovernmental organizations and Member States is a hallmark for good governance and important for proper decision-making.

Guiding Questions:

1. What mechanisms could governments implement to promote transparency and accountability to UHC stakeholders and to demonstrate that their health system is equitable, evidence-led, and aligns with identified national health objectives?
2. What policy mechanism should be included in a health systems' regulatory framework to collect information and analyze the data to inform decision-makers?
3. How should the health system organization structure be designed to ensure the implementation of effective policies? Which stakeholders should have a seat at the table and what should their role be?

Resources:

- Successes and challenges of health systems governance towards universal health coverage and global health security: a narrative review and synthesis of the literature. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-022-00858-7
- Health Systems Governance for Universal Health Coverage Action Plan. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240011603
- Health system governance. https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-systems-governance
- Governance for health in the 21st century. https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/171334/RC62BD01-Governance-for-Health-Web.pdf
- Grand challenges in global health governance. British medical bulletin, 90(1), 7-18. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=74349c70105039c2800125461512b8b4045cb51d
- Vian T. (2020). Anti-corruption, transparency, and accountability in health: concepts, frameworks, and approaches. Global health action, 13(sup1), 1694744. https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2019.1694744

Progress Update: Moving forward with Financing Universal Health Coverage
Topic: Health Financing

Health financing plays a crucial role in advancing UHC and improving effective service coverage and financial protection. Inadequate access to healthcare services due to the cost is a significant concern for millions of people, with many receiving poor quality services even when paying out-of-pocket. However, well-designed and implemented health financing policies can help to address these issues.

1. **Improving transparency:** The lack of transparency surrounding health financing can be problematic in many ways. Patients are disadvantaged by the lack of transparency on the cost of health care products and services, limiting their access to care. In addition, the absence of knowledge about the present investments by the major donors to global health can hinder cooperation among developing countries and international donors.

2. **Performance Metrics:** Performance metrics are essential to reveal areas that need improvement and require additional investment. Ensuring that performance metrics analyzed are accurate can be an effective means of optimizing health financing initiatives.
3. **Balancing Access and Affordability:** Healthcare reform initiatives must address how to deliver improved outcomes at a lower cost in a way that is accessible to users.

Questions:

1. How can the fragmentation of funds be reduced or mitigated to improve health system performance?
2. In what ways can health systems move towards more strategic purchasing of health services, and how can provider payments be linked to performance data and population health needs?
3. What strategies can be used to align coverage policies, such as benefits and copayments, with explicit policy objectives to improve health outcomes?

Resources:

- World Health Organization (WHO) improves Health Financing Data:https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/who-improves-transparency-of-financial-data
- Balance between Accessibility, Value and Affordability: https://www.ispor.org/docs/default-source/publications/value-outcomes-spotlight/november-december-2019/feature-article.pdf?sfvrsn=e9f3025d_0
- Health financing for universal coverage and health system performance: concepts and implications for policy: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3738310
- Past, Present, and Future of Global Health Financing: https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)30841-4/fulltext
- Institute of Medicine (US) Roundtable on Evidence-Based Medicine; Yong PL, Saunders RS, Olsen LA, editors. The Healthcare Imperative: Lowering Costs and Improving Outcomes: Workshop Series Summary. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2010. 10, Transparency of Cost and Performance. Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK53921/
- Sridhar, D. Batniji, R. (2008). Misfinancing global health: a case for transparency in disbursements and decision making. The Lancet. 372 (9644), 1185-1191, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(08)61485-3.