

150th Executive Board of the World Health Organization

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Provisional Agenda Item 15.3 WHO's work in health emergencies

Honourable Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

People living with circulatory conditions are disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of attention to NCDs in the early stages of the pandemic impeded their inclusion in strategic response plans and few countries included NCDs as part of essential health services packages. This has resulted in a deadly interplay between the NCD epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic.

NCDs including hypertension, kidney disease, diabetes, stroke, and other circulatory conditions must be a top priority in preparedness, response, readiness and coordination activities and agreements at global, regional and country levels.

As such, our organisations, representing the global circulatory health community (those most impacted by COVID-19), call on Member States to

- Prioritize ongoing prevention, screening, and treatment for circulatory conditions in national COVID-19 response and recovery plans through patient co-creation;
- Increase domestic allocation of resources and develop targeted policies to tackle CVD and NCD risk factors, including the commercial determinants of health, through mechanisms such as taxation of unhealthy commodities;
- Integrate monitoring and data collection on NCD prevalence, comorbidities, and risk factors into measures of pandemic readiness, resilience, and response;
- Strengthen Primary Health Care and invest in family medicine to ensure equitable access to essential health services, particularly for people living with NCDs and in low-resource settings; and
- Strengthen the NCD component of emergency preparedness and response by formalizing these actions in a WHO convention, agreement or international instrument on pandemic preparedness.

These steps would go far in making health systems more resilient and are expanded upon in our [positon paper](#). We look forward to working with you to prevent, and where necessary, respond to future health emergencies.

Thank you.

Global Coalition for Circulatory Health Members¹:

Framework Convention Alliance for Tobacco Control

International Alliance of Patients' Organizations

International Council of Nurses

International Diabetes Federation

International Society of Nephrology

World Heart Federation

World Hypertension League

World Organization of Family Doctors

World Stroke Organization

Global Heart Hub

International Atherosclerosis Society

International Society of Hypertension

Also supported by:

International Pharmaceutical Students Federation

¹ Organizations in bold are Non-State Actors in Official Relations with the WHO