

WHO Taskforce on Nursing and Midwifery in the context of Universal Health Coverage

BACKGROUND

The health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) place a clear emphasis on achieving universal health coverage. The WHO General Programme of Work 13 (GPW13) 2019-2023 also has a triple billion target to reach more vulnerable people. No actor alone will achieve these ambitious goals. Nurses and midwives form the largest number of health care providers globally, so their active engagement in this interdisciplinary work is important. Yet globally, the nursing and midwifery workforce continues to face numerous challenges that will require resolution to enable nurses and midwives to support the achievement of universal health coverage.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TASKFORCE

WHO currently lacks a nursing and midwifery governance mechanism capable of developing a systematic approach to strengthening and expanding the involvement and contribution of nursing and midwifery theory, knowledge and experience within WHO. The Director General tasked the Chief Nursing Officer and a group of nurses and midwives to champion an open, inclusive organization-wide approach, drawing upon the contributions of relevant stakeholders, partners and professional organizations.

Taskforce Goal

The WHO Taskforce on Nursing and Midwifery will provide an interdisciplinary platform to strengthen, mainstream and make visible the contributions of nurses and midwives at WHO headquarters, regional and country offices.

OBJECTIVES OF THE TASKFORCE

The Taskforce has five interconnected objectives:

1. Strengthen leadership to inform and shape future contributions of nurses and midwives, advocate and gain political commitment, develop a plan of action.
2. Improve coordination to develop platform for coordination between WHO offices, facilitate inputs by nurses and midwives into WHO policy and programmes.
3. Increase collaboration between WHO and other nursing and midwifery institutes and experts and identify opportunities for increasing strategic influence of nurses and midwives.
4. Develop research and evidence among other strategies, explore nursing and midwifery related gaps and identify where contributions to research, evidence and normative guidance; enhance role of WHO Collaborating Centres.
5. Enhance partnerships to embed nursing and midwifery perspectives into Global Health Initiative policies and practices, systematically ensure the inclusion of nursing and midwifery partners and agencies in global, regional and country decision making processes.

MEMBERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The Taskforce will include representatives from a range of WHO headquarters clusters, departments and Regional and Country offices. The Taskforce members commit to promoting relevant nursing and midwifery issues within their department and make linkages with other departments represented on the Taskforce. The Taskforce will be led and Chaired by the WHO CNO, supported by a core group and meet quarterly.

