

WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY 2020 COVID-19 STATEMENT

May 13, 2020

IntraHealth International commends the World Health Organization (WHO) for its leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in addressing urgent issues faced by frontline health workers in low- and middle-income countries.

IntraHealth has worked in more than 100 countries over 40 years to improve the performance of health workers and strengthen the systems in which they work. Our expertise is now being utilized to meet the health workforce challenges of COVID-19. We also house the Frontline Health Workers Coalition secretariat, which recently released [policy recommendations](#) that we urge the WHO and member states to prioritize.

Member states and the WHO must address the fact that there is not a global data set on health worker infections and deaths from COVID-19. We know, however, that [tens of thousands of health workers have been infected, hundreds have died](#), and others have been [attacked or harassed](#). The [Solidarity Response Fund](#) needs investments to provide equitable access to quality personal protective equipment and associated training to all health workers fighting the pandemic.

We commend the WHO's development of COVID-19-specific knowledge and making tools like the WHO Academy rapidly available. We call for more investment in the WHO-ILO-OECD [Working for Health Multilateral Trust Fund](#) to strengthen the health workforce for the next pandemic.

We continue to encourage the WHO to support member states to:

- Prepare health workers with the skills, resources, and information they need
- Elevate health workers' voices in policymaking
- Develop real-time emergency communications and digital health tools to keep data flowing during crises
- Build stronger supply chains to keep essential medicines and PPE in stock
- Ensure the occupational health and safety of frontline health workers

And as women make up 70% of the health workforce, we urge the WHO to assist member states in gender-transformative policies to remove barriers women face within the health workforce, which have been amplified by COVID-19.

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