

WHA72: ACCESS TO MEDICINES AND VACCINES

ITEM 11.7

IntraHealth International commends and welcomes WHO's road map for access to medicines, vaccines, and other health products, 2019 – 2023. We applaud the road map's comprehensive health-system approach to improve access to health products and are encouraged with the recognition of the importance of a health workforce in the road map.

The road map highlights the importance of capacity building of member states in their regulatory systems; research and development of health products; evidence-based selection, including health technology assessment; supply chain and procurement; and market monitoring. We are cognizant that such technical areas require highly skilled personnel with attractive job prospects in the for-profit private sector, resulting in high turnover and attrition. We emphasize the importance of applying a labor market approach, considering education systems, incentives and compensation, and career pathways to ensure necessary experts remain at the necessary public institutions.

We appreciate the attention paid to the importance of appropriate prescribing, dispensing, and rational use of medicines and health products. With the emphasis on primary health care and the increasing burden of noncommunicable diseases, we urge member states to prioritize strengthening teams of frontline health workers, who often must perform the additional role of dispensers and health educators in remote health facilities. These health workers face increasingly complex tasks of managing prescribing and educating patients and their families to ensure safe and rational use of health products.

We know many clients rely on private for-profit facilities to access health products yet improving private facilities' capabilities to provide appropriate health products is often harder than working with the public sector. We urge WHO and member states to elaborate targeted actions in working with the private sector to ensure access to safe health products.

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