

INTRAHEALTH INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT AT 70TH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

May 2017

13.3 ADDRESSING THE GLOBAL SHORTAGE OF AND ACCESS TO MEDICINES AND VACCINES

As recognized by the WHO, access to quality, safe, and effective medicines requires a health systems approach addressing all steps of the supply chain. As defined by the WHO, health workers include not only clinicians, but also anyone “whose job it is to protect and improve the health of their communities” including people who manage supply chains at all levels, perhaps even those driving trucks that help medicines and vaccines reach remote populations. IntraHealth will continue to support ministries of health to improve distribution of medicines and other health commodities and help build capacity of people working at all levels of the supply chain. Without these individuals, access to medicines is not possible.

We applaud WHO’s efforts and urge Member States to implement the recommendations of the WHO’s first-ever Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030 to reduce the projected global shortfall of 18 million health workers and ensure a global fit-for-purpose workforce—including the supply chain workforce—by 2030.

We urge WHO and Member States to support implementation of the action plan of the High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth. A key recommendation of this Commission is to “reform service models concentrated on hospital care and focus instead on prevention and on the efficient provision of high-quality, affordable, integrated, community-based, people-centered primary and ambulatory care, paying special attention to underserved areas.” Unless essential medicines and vaccines reach people living in the most underserved communities, we cannot improve access globally. All of the medicines and vaccines in the world cannot prevent disease or save lives unless they reach people who need them at the right time and place. Effective and efficient supply chains depend on well-qualified and well-equipped workers.

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