

75th World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization

Geneva, Switzerland

22-28 May 2022

Provisional Agenda Item 16.2

Honourable Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

People living with circulatory conditions have been 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 all levels.

While we are grateful to be able to participate in the many ongoing processes around Emergency Preparedness and are gratified by the increasing focus on strengthening health systems, we express our concern that the “syndemic” of infectious and non-communicable diseases continues to receive insufficient attention. 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 [position paper](#). We look forward to working with you to prevent, and where necessary, respond to future health emergencies.

Core Constituency:

Framework Convention Alliance for Tobacco Control
International Alliance of Patients' Organizations
International Diabetes Federation
International Pharmaceutical Students Federation
International Society of Nephrology
World Heart Federation
World Hypertension League
World Stroke Organization

Also supported by:

World Organization of Family Doctors
World Federation of Public Health Associations
Global Heart Hub
International Atherosclerosis Society
International Society of Hypertension