

Robyn Langham Statement at the 72nd session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific on the GCCH paper - *Preventing the Next Pandemic: The Case for Investing in Circulatory Health*

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating physical, mental and fiscal impact on the millions of people living with kidney disease who have a higher risk of severe illness and death from the virus.

Simultaneously, the burden of COVID-19 and the measures necessary to retard its progression have had a significant impact upon health systems and our patients' ability to access vital medical care such as dialysis.

As a member of the Global Coalition for Circulatory Health (GCCH), the ISN calls on WHO member states to mitigate the impact of any future pandemic upon our patients by taking the following steps:

- Prevent, screen, and treat for circulatory conditions through coordinated national COVID-19 response and recovery plans via concerted patient co-creation and collaboration
- Increase spending and develop targeted policies to tackle CVD and NCD risk factors
- Include indicators on circulatory disease prevalence, comorbidities, and risk factors into measures of pandemic readiness, resilience, and response
- Ensure people living with circulatory conditions and in low-resource settings have good and equitable access to essential health services, especially priority access to vaccination and other disease prevention methods.
- Support and integrate the use of effective new models to deliver quality health services
- Invest in research to improve understanding of determinants and on developing sustainable and scalable models of integrated long-term responses to emerging health challenges

With meta-analysis indicating that hypertension, diabetes, and chronic kidney disease being both the most prevalent and most dangerous co-morbidities in COVID-19 patients, the world simply cannot wait for the next pandemic to invest in circulatory health.

Next month's special session of the World Health Assembly brings hope – with consideration of a WHO convention on pandemic preparedness and response, you have the opportunity to take concrete steps towards improving kidney health in the Western Pacific Region.

Please, be explicit, about the need for such a convention as this is literally a once in a lifetime opportunity to secure a pandemic free future.



International Society of
Nephrology

www.theisn.org

Global Operations

Avenue des Arts 1-2
B-1210 Brussels – Belgium
Tel: +32 2 808 04 20
Fax: +32 2 808 44 54
Email: info@theisn.org

US Operations

340 North Avenue 3rd Floor
Cranford, NJ 07016-2496
United States of America
Tel: +1 567 248 9703
Fax: +1 908 272 7101
Email: info@theisn.org

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