



JANUARY 24, 2022

WFC JOINS CALL TO STRENGTHEN GLOBAL REHABILITATION PROVISION

This week sees the World Health Organization's Executive Board Meeting (EB150). As a non-state actor in official relations with WHO, the World Federation of Chiropractic has collaborated with other non-state actors, the Global Rehabilitation Alliance (GRA) and the Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health (G-MUSC) to develop and submit the following statements:

Statement to agenda item 15.1 'Strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies'

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION: EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING January 24-29, 2022

Rehabilitation is a key health strategy that optimizes functioning and quality of life in individuals with health conditions, in interaction with their environment.

Rehabilitation has demonstrated its relevance in health emergencies, including those associated with infectious disease outbreaks like COVID-19, in the acute and sub-acute phases, as well as for long-term conditions. More than half of the 236 million people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 do or will experience post-COVID symptoms. Most of them will need rehabilitation to facilitate long-term recovery.

In addition, rehabilitation services are essential for some groups, including some persons with disabilities, and should continue to be provided throughout outbreaks.

This pandemic will not be the last. Currently, there is a window of opportunity for policy makers to integrate rehabilitation as an essential component of pandemic preparedness and response.

Handicap International Federation, International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine, World Confederation for Physical Therapy, World Federation of Occupational Therapists, International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics, **World Federation of Chiropractic**, International Spinal Cord Society, supported by the Global Rehabilitation Alliance and G-Musc call to:

- Develop technical resources and capacity to strengthen rehabilitation across the continuum of health emergencies, including the availability of rehabilitation workers in the first phase of the emergency response
- Ensure responsiveness to the rehabilitation needs of people affected by pandemics and the other groups requiring continuous access to rehabilitation, via the integration of rehabilitation services at all levels of health and via alternative modalities such as telerehabilitation.
- Leverage rehabilitation onto the agenda of the World Health Assembly. Setting commitments to advance rehabilitation cannot be further delayed.

Statement to agenda item 7. 'Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases'

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION: EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING January 24-29, 2022

Handicap International Federation, International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine, International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics, **World Federation of Chiropractic**, International Spinal Cord Society, World Confederation for Physical Therapy, World Federation of Occupational Therapists, supported by the Global Rehabilitation Alliance, Light for the World and G-Musc, welcome the references to rehabilitation in the Report by the Director-General:

- 1) the surge in rehabilitation needs due to COVID-19 and among people with NCDs;
- 2) the unmet rehabilitation needs for people with neurological disorders; and
- 3) the importance of early-rehabilitation after traumatic brain and spinal cord injury.

Rehabilitation is necessary to reduce the consequences of NCDs, shorten hospital length of stay, improve functioning, slow or stop deterioration in health, and improve quality of life, including for persons with disabilities with different health conditions.

Globally, 2.4 billion people would benefit from rehabilitation. The prevalence of NCDs greatly contributes to this figure: in 2010, 50% of disability-adjusted life years were attributable to NCDs, in low and middle-income countries.

However, rehabilitation is not prioritized in health systems, is under-resourced, and remains inaccessible or unaffordable for most people.

We therefore call on Member States to:

- Embed rehabilitation in the 2023–2030 road map for the global action plan for the prevention and control of NCDs 2013–2030.
- Integrate rehabilitation at all levels of the health system, from primary health care, to hospitals and specialized care, across the continuum of NCD care
- Include rehabilitation including for assistive technology in home/community-based services, by developing locally owned and skilled workforce.
- Leverage rehabilitation onto the WHA agenda, with a view to providing the political framework for stronger commitments and wider coverage.