COMMUNITIES AT THE HEART OF UHC

Calls to Action for the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage

When the global community renewed its commitment to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC), we made a promise to secure health access for all and to prioritize hard-to-reach populations. Community-based primary health care is critical for achieving this goal as it bridges the gap between facilities and a country's hardest-to-reach populations. **The Communities at the Heart of UHC Campaign calls for the prioritization of quality community health programs that are financially sustainable and integrated in country health systems at the United Nations High-Level Meeting on UHC (HLM-UHC).**

We affirm that investing in community health is the most efficient and equitable way to achieve UHC. Estimates indicate that 90% of all health needs can be met at the primary care level.[1] It is well documented that community health workers (CHWs) can deliver better maternal, child, reproductive and adult health outcomes when properly integrated into the system and supported by evidence-based best practices.[2]

Given current financial and human resources for health shortages, we recognize that investing in country community health programs is the most effective and feasible way for countries to deliver on UHC promises by 2030, especially for vulnerable populations. We need all stakeholders on board to ensure community health programs are prioritized at the HLM-UHC.[3]

We call on Ministers of Health and Government Officials to encourage Heads of State to attend the high-level meeting and declare commitment to reaching their most vulnerable populations with the care they deserve by including quality community health as a UHC priority in formal statements.

- We encourage Ministries and Governments to accompany statements with clearly defined and costed priorities for community primary health care investments.
- Further, we encourage ministries and governments to mobilize domestic resources and prioritize budgetary allocations to primary health care, given greatest equity return.[4,5]

We call on advocates and civil society to raise up their voices to amplify evidence on the value of quality, sustainable community health programs in achieving UHC, particularly holding governments accountable to deliver for the most vulnerable by including community health within declared UHC priorities and accompanied budgets.

We call on multilateral, philanthropic and technical leaders to prioritize funding for strengthening community-based primary health care and to encourage Heads of State to include quality community health in declared UHC priorities and any funded health strategies.

The Communities at the Heart of UHC Campaign fully endorses the Community Health Worker Resolution adopted at the World Health Assembly 72 which recognizes "the contribution made by CHWs to achieving universal health coverage, responding to health emergencies and promoting healthier populations."[6] Further, in support of the resolution's call for countries and partners to utilize the World Health Organization's CHW guidelines for community health to optimize systems performance, all references to quality in this call to action are in line with evidence-based recommendations around supplies, strategies, supervision, skills, salaries and adequate financing.

Turn over for references.

References

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6. World Health Assembly Update, 22 May 2019. News Release. https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/22-05-2019-world-health-assembly-72-update