

## Key facts

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) make up **four of the top five causes of death** in the Western Pacific Region.

By 2050, the **number of people aged 60 and older in the Region will have doubled**, which will create a shift in healthcare needs.

**One in five people** in the Region are pushed into poverty due to health expenses.

**Increased health awareness and low trust** in health systems are changing how people interact with health services.

**A people-centred approach to primary health care**, where people play an active role in managing their health, is essential to health system transformation for the future.



A rapidly ageing population, increased burden of NCDs and health security risks, worsening economic outlook, and other changes in the Western Pacific Region are transforming peoples' health needs today and into the future. These changes are compounding existing gaps in national health systems across the Region. Many countries face **health workforce shortages, many people are pushed into poverty from excessive health-care costs**, and many groups still face **barriers to accessing primary health-care** services due to cost, location or other social and cultural factors.

As Member States aim to transform their health systems to meet these present and future challenges, adopting a new approach to primary health care will be essential. Primary health care for the future needs to build systems that not only treat illness but also continually interact with patients and people to **maintain health and well-being**. Transforming health systems also means establishing health services that are **tailored to the needs of individuals, and rebuilding trust** in primary health care.

Countries can take action to build primary health-care systems that focus on maintaining well-being by **empowering people and communities** to improve their own health, and holding providers accountable for results. **Increased and smarter investments of domestic funding in primary health care** would also help reduce the financial hardships people face and strengthen and diversify the health workforce to meet the changing needs.

Countries can also change **how primary health-care services are organized and delivered** so care is delivered closer to communities, including through **digital technologies**. Additionally, Member States can **increase coordination between health and non-health sectors** and develop the **right policies and regulations** for comprehensive, people-centred primary health care.

## WHO response

In partnership with Member States, WHO has developed the new *Regional Framework on the Future of Primary Health Care in the Western Pacific*. WHO is committed to primary health care as a top priority and an overarching vision for health sector transformation. It is also essential for global progress on universal health coverage (UHC).

WHO advocates to Member States for more **political commitment and greater investment** in strengthening primary health care, and works to engage other sectors that have a positive impact on health. WHO supports countries in developing **national health policies, strategies and plans** that focus on primary health care, and, where needed, it builds country capacity and facilitates joint learning.

WHO provides tailored advice based on evidence to guide countries' actions to **provide better-quality services and reduce the barriers** people face in accessing primary health care.

WHO partners with other stakeholders at regional and country levels to support countries in implementing primary health-care reform in a way that matches their local context. WHO **monitors regional progress and performance** on primary health care as part of UHC and SDG monitoring.

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