

**Statement of the
International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA)
69th Session of WHO Europe Regional Committee**

**Agenda Item 5.g Accelerating primary health care in the WHO European Region:
organizational and technological innovation in the context of the Declaration of
Astana**

We are all part of a community whose main priority is the wellbeing of the patient. How do we reach the ambitious Universal Health Coverage target by 2030?

The IFMSA strongly believes that the most cost-effective way to sustainably solve today's health problems and health system challenges, achieve UHC and the health-related SDGs is through Primary Health Care.

There is an urgent need to invest in research and development of technologies and procedures that bring the healthcare system closer to the population. Implementing telemedicine and e-monitoring, community-based laboratories, rapid diagnostic tests, would enrich healthcare service delivery, improve the quality of services and patient safety, and increase the efficiency and coordination of care. One area that will benefit hugely from such an investment would be the rural areas; with adequate enough tools, a majority of diseases could be cared for in the community itself, thus reducing the sums spent on, for instance, transportation and hospitalization. Moreover, shifting tasks from physicians to nurses, from specialists to general practitioners, would save not only time but costs as well.

As part of the future generation of health professionals, we consider that medical schools have the responsibility of offering high-quality PHC placements and of encouraging national and international medical exchanges in this field. The IFMSA recognizes that a potential initiative that governments could develop would be to offer loans for students who pursue training in primary care, scholarships for young doctors training in primary care and ultimately, increase remuneration for primary care physicians and rural practitioners.

IFMSA congratulates the health community for the Astana Declaration. Nonetheless, it is of the utmost importance to include all relevant stakeholders, including youth, who are the future health professionals and the fore-front of our health workforce. Realizing the potential of the younger generation will act as an accelerator to implement robust PHC systems and reach UHC by 2030. We urge future initiatives not to forget the role of young people as an equal partner across all stages, from identification, analysis and design, to decision making and implementation.

People-centred health systems are one of the four pillars of the Health 2020 initiative. We invite the European community to work together to reach our destination.