



The National Health Workforce Accounts: A factsheet

What are the National Health Workforce Accounts?

The National Health Workforce Accounts (NHWA) is a system by which countries can progressively improve the availability, quality and use of health workforce data. It comprises a set of 78 indicators that support the effective monitoring, management and governance of the health workforce to deliver a transformed and effective health workforce within strengthened health systems. The NHWA was developed in consultation with experts including academics, national health workforce and information systems specialists, policy planners, international organisations and health professionals.

Why is the NHWA important in the WHO European Region?

The health workforce has a critical role to play in tackling 21st-century health challenges related to demographic, epidemiological and technological changes, as well as those resulting from conflict and natural and man-made disasters. Health workers must be at the forefront of meeting these challenges, mitigating the effects of the social determinants of health and providing health promotion, disease prevention and integrated people-centred health services across the delivery of care.

Effective health and care in the WHO European Region can only be achieved fully with a sustainable, resilient health workforce, transformed with the knowledge, skills, values, ethics and behaviours to address the existing, emerging and new health challenges. Planned investment in the health workforce is a key enabler for health systems strengthening in the European Region.

In 2017, the 67th session of the Regional Committee (EUR/RC67/R5) adopted the regional Framework for Action *Towards a Sustainable Health Workforce in the WHO European Region*¹, which translates and builds on the visions laid out by the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030² and the UN High Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth³. The European Framework for Action is grounded in the health labour market framework approach and sets out key strategic objectives for Member States in the European Region in terms of education and performance, planning and investment, capacity building, and analysis and monitoring.

The success of all these strategies depends on evidence-informed national, regional and global policies that in turn require rigorous data that can be analysed in terms of the health labour market framework for UHC. The NHWA is closely aligned with the health labour market framework and provides a comprehensive picture of key health labour market domains (education and training, labour market dynamics, financing, governance and regulation).

¹ <http://www.euro.who.int/en/about-us/governance/regional-committee-for-europe/past-sessions/67th-session/documentation/working-documents/eurrc6710-towards-a-sustainable-health-workforce-in-the-who-european-region-framework-for-action>

² <https://www.who.int/hrh/resources/globstrathrh-2030/en/>

³ <https://www.who.int/hrh/com-heeg/en/>

Who are the health workforce?

The Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030 and the European Framework for Action adopt a broad and inclusive definition of the health workforce, which covers all workers in the health services, public health and in related areas, and workers who provide support to these activities. This broad scope usually includes, but is not limited to, health professionals, other health and social care workers, informal carers, support staff, administrators and managers. Such workers can be located in one or more environments, such as public health, primary and community care, long-term care, secondary and tertiary care, or in support functions.

How can the NHTWA assist Member States in the WHO European Region to achieve national health policy objectives?

Information generated by the NHTWA can assist Member States in the EURO Region to develop health workforce policies, strategies and planning options to support the delivery of national health policy objectives. Progressive implementation of the NHTWA will enable:

- a better understanding of the health workforce, its characteristics, size and distribution
- strengthened human resources information systems and research to guide policy decisions
- multi-stakeholder and intersectoral policy dialogue for health workforce strengthening
- improved prioritisation and planning of investment for a sustainable health workforce towards universal health coverage.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe has prepared a series of exemplar policy scenarios that may be of assistance to Member States in considering how the NHTWA can support addressing health workforce challenges and designing health workforce policies and strategies.

How can Member States in the WHO European Region implement the NHTWA?

The implementation of the NHTWA is a country-led activity. It builds on existing national systems and mechanisms to progressively improve country capacity to collect, analyse, use and report health workforce data to inform policy-making. It is a collaborative activity bringing together multiple stakeholders who should work closely with the nominated NHTWA focal point.

WHO has developed an Implementation Guide to help countries implement the NHTWA in a sustainable manner. The guide proposes eight non-sequential steps over three phases to strengthen health workforce data availability, quality, and use.



To facilitate data gathering and use in a timely and effective manner, WHO has developed the NHTWA Online Data Platform, which enables countries to record, analyse and visualize health workforce information primarily for their own use.

In the European Region, health workforce information collected through the OECD/Eurostat/WHO Europe Joint Questionnaire on Non-Monetary Health Care Statistics is mirrored in the NHTWA Online Data Platform.

Resources

- Using the NHTWA to tackle health workforce challenges resource pack <http://www.euro.who.int/en/NHTWAresourcepack>
- National Health Workforce Accounts – A Handbook http://www.who.int/hrh/documents/brief_nhwa_handbook/en/
- National Health Workforce Accounts – Implementation Guide http://www.who.int/hrh/documents/brief_nhwa_imp-guide/en/
- More resources and videos are available at: <http://www.who.int/hrh/statistics/nhwa/>