
Policy, Guidance and Recommendations for COVID-19 Decision-Making



The World Health Organization (WHO) continues to expand its COVID-19 resource base for policymakers and decision-makers with new briefs and tools aimed at helping the health systems to manage the current novel coronavirus crisis.

You may also like: [Free Online COVID-19 Educational Resources for Healthcare Workers](#)

Strengthening the health system response to COVID-19: Policy Brief

This [document](#) is an overview of 16 recommendations for strengthening the health system response to COVID-19 in the WHO European Region, breaking chains of transmission and diagnosing and treating cases while maintaining essential services.

Specifically, the WHO recommends health leaders do the following:

1. Expand capacity for communication and proactively manage media relations.
2. Bolster capacity of essential public health services to enable the emergency response.
3. Clarify first point of contact strategy for suspected COVID cases: phone, online, physical.
4. Protect other potential first contact health system entry points assuming not all people will follow advice.
5. Designate hospitals to receive COVID-19 patients and prepare to mobilise surge acute and ICU capacity.
6. Organise and expand services close to home for COVID-19 response.
7. Maintain continuity of essential services while freeing up capacity for COVID-19 response.
8. Train, repurpose and mobilise the health workforce according to priority services.
9. Protect the physical health of frontline health workers.
10. Anticipate and address mental health needs of the health workforce.
11. Review supply chain and stocks for essential medicines and health technologies.
12. Mobilise financial support and ease logistical operational barriers.
13. Assess and mitigate potential financial barriers to accessing care.
14. Assess and mitigate potential physical access barriers for vulnerable groups of people.
15. Optimise social protection to mitigate the impact of public health measures on household financial security.
16. Ensure clarity in roles, relationships, and coordination mechanisms in health system governance and across the government.

These action areas are explored in more depth in the accompanying technical guides.

If you want to share your experience and perspective on COVID-19, [please do](#).

If your company is interested in engaging with our [COVID-19 community](#), please send us an [email](#).

Action Points for the WHO European Region by WHO Transmission Scenarios

This [guide](#) accompanies the above policy brief and presents how the 16 action areas will need to change in frequency and focus as member states move across four transmission scenarios of the COVID-19 pandemic (no cases; sporadic cases; clusters of cases; community transmission).

Technical guidance #1: Maintaining continuity of essential services and mobilising the health workforce

This document focuses on maintaining continuity of essential health care services across the continuum of care while managing the COVID-19 response, in particular, policy recommendations 7-10, for which the following is outlined.

7) Maintain continuity of essential services while freeing up capacity for COVID-19 response

- Determine which health and social care services are essential
- Optimise service delivery platforms
- Ensure the safety of essential healthcare services

8) Train, repurpose and mobilise the health workforce according to priority services

- Identify the health workforce available for surge capacity demands and essential healthcare services
- Repurpose and upskill for rapid deployment to meet surge capacity needs and deliver essential health care services
- Address contractual and related issues and put in place policies to enable rapid response
- Maintain ongoing communications with health workers

9) Protect the physical health of frontline health workers

- Ensure the safety and protection of health workers in frontline of health care services delivery
- Address occupational health concerns relating to COVID-19

10) Anticipate and address mental health needs of the health workforce

- Provide mental health and psychosocial supports for health workers

Adaptt Surge Planning Support Tool

This is an Excel-based graphical [tool](#), which allows member states to focus on surge planning information, such as the number of beds required, the dates of predicted bed shortages and the detailed human resources needed. It supports the input of hospital activities and practices, hospital capacity and human resources for health capacity.

Health Workforce Estimator (HWFE)

Also an Excel-driven [tool](#), HWFE can be used to estimate the required number of each type of health worker based on the target number of mild, moderate, severe and critical patients per day. It also provides an analysis of the throughput of patients in multiple facilities and highlights workforce gaps for each type of health worker.

Essential Supplies Forecasting Tool (ESFT)

ESFT is another Excel-based [tool](#) for essential supplies management. It provides specific, focused outputs, including detailed quantifications of:

- equipment (personal protective equipment, diagnostics, biomedical equipment, drugs and consumables);
- inpatient beds (total, severe and critical); and
- tests (for mild, suspected, severe and critical cases).

The tool also provides some outputs on COVID-19 cases and health workforce requirements, including community health workers, in an aggregated format.

The HWFE, Adaptt and ESFT tools all complement each other using the same base clinical attack rate ranges and ILO ISCO codes for health workforce classification. The outputs of the former two are, however, intentionally different due to their primary focus.

The latest set of available tools from the WHO can be found [here](#).

The latest version of the WHO Technical Guidance can be found [here](#).

WHO COVID-19 [home](#).

WHO COVID-19 latest updates are posted [here](#).

Other resources (Europe)

[European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#)

[European Commission](#)

[PREPARE – European response to outbreak](#)

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[European Health Management Association](#)

[List of the European national information resources on COVID-19 \(ECDC\)](#)

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