



A joint Statement Submitted by the NCD Alliance and the Eastern Mediterranean NCD Alliance

Agenda: EMRC70/5: Health workforce in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: from COVID-19 lessons to action.

70th Session of WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean – Cairo.

Your excellences, Ministers of Health, Delegates, ladies and Gentlemen.

The Eastern Mediterranean NCD Alliance, supported by the Global NCD Alliance, would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work done by WHO, Member States, and all relevant stakeholders in strengthening the health workforce to advance NCD care in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

The existing gaps and shortages within the healthcare workforce in the Region pose a threat to our ability to effectively address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and provide high-quality care to those in need. Most countries are facing a range of challenges that undermine their ability to manage NCDs effectively; including :

- Shortage of healthcare professionals and uneven distribution of workforce, which tend to be concentrated in urban centers, lead to inadequate access to NCD services, particularly in remote communities.
- Training programs for healthcare providers often lack a focus on NCD prevention, early diagnosis, and comprehensive management which leaves them ill-prepared to tackle these complex diseases.
- Lack of resources, including equipment, medications, and healthcare infrastructure, hinder the delivery of comprehensive NCD care.
- High workloads, burnout, and inadequate incentives are factors that contribute to the attrition of healthcare workers and worsen the shortage of professionals.

In light of these pressing issues, we call on Member states to take concrete actions to address these gaps and shortages within the EMR healthcare workforce to effectively tackle the growing NCD crisis;

- Invest in NCD-specific training and continuous education for healthcare professionals, particularly those working in PHC settings. Encourage the integration of NCD care into the curricula of medical and nursing schools.
- Explore innovative approaches, such as task-shifting to community health workers and leveraging telemedicine, to extend the reach of NCD care to underserved populations.
- Provide incentives, including financial incentives and career development opportunities, to retain healthcare professionals in rural and underserved areas, where NCD care is often lacking.

- Strengthen NCD data collection and surveillance systems to better understand the magnitude of the problem, track progress, and inform evidence-based decision-making.

Thank You