

NCD Alliance reaction statement: WHA73 Resolution on COVID-19 response

Language English

STATEMENT

The NCD Alliance welcomes the support from the world's governments for today's resolution on the response to COVID-19. As many Ministers reiterated, there has never been a more crucial moment to invest in Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as the indispensable foundation of healthy populations, resilient health systems, global security and sustainable economies.

We especially welcome the recognition that people living with noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) require particular attention in the response. While COVID-19 is indiscriminate in who it infects, it is proving anything but egalitarian in its mortality. This is particularly true for people living with NCDs.

It is now for governments to take the recommendations of this resolution forward in their national COVID-19 response plans. NCD prevention and treatment is the insurance policy to improve population health, as a vital basis for health security, and to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again. To prevent further deaths of people living with NCDs, we call on governments to:

- Tackle the causes and impacts of NCDs in national COVID-19 response and preparedness plans to develop resilience for future health emergencies;
- Involve communities and civil society, particularly people living with NCDs, in developing national action plans.
- Act to prevent and treat NCDs as a vital basis for safer and more equitable societies and more resilient health systems. NCDs reflect and exacerbate health inequities, which are being compounded by the higher risk of severe outcomes of COVID-19 for people living with NCDs and other chronic conditions.
- Ensure that people living with NCDs do not experience disruptions to essential care and health services. WHO and governments must work together to minimise the expected aftershocks on weakened health systems as people return to health systems to seek care for more advanced stages of disease.
- Improve data collection to monitor non-COVID deaths, including of people living with NCDs.
- Work with WHO to integrate specific consideration of people living with NCDs into the triple billion targets on health emergencies.

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"We now know that people living with NCDs such as diabetes, heart disease and kidney disease, as well as hypertension and obesity, are at much higher risk of suffering severe complications and dying from COVID-19," said Katie Dain, CEO of the NCD Alliance. "COVID-19 obliges us all to learn important lessons - a failure to invest in health and NCDs is a failure to invest in a country's own security, stability and equity. Governments should learn from the pandemic to build back better. "

We applaud the tireless efforts of the WHO team at all levels of the organisation in responding to the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19. We are proud to stand with WHO and to offer our continued support in the pandemic response to ensure that nobody is left behind.

- NCD Alliance briefing note on NCDs and COVID-19: <https://ncdalliance.org/resources/briefing-note-impacts-of-covid-19-on-people-living-with-ncds> [1]
- Questions on answers on COVID-19 and NCDs: <https://ncdalliance.org/resources/covid-19-and-noncommunicable-diseases-ncds-questions-and-answers> [2]
- Joint statement of the WHO Civil Society Working Group on NCDs <https://ncdalliance.org/resources/wha73-statement-who-civil-society-working-group-on-ncds> [3]

[Read here](#) [4] the WHO Resolution on COVID-19 response.

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[pandemics](#) [6]

[noncommunicable diseases](#) [7]

[NCD voices](#) [8]

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Links

[1] <https://ncdalliance.org/resources/briefing-note-impacts-of-covid-19-on-people-living-with-ncds>

[2] <https://ncdalliance.org/resources/covid-19-and-noncommunicable-diseases-ncds-questions-and-answers>

[3] <https://ncdalliance.org/resources/wha73-statement-who-civil-society-working-group-on-ncds>

[4] https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA73/A73_CONF1Rev1-en.pdf

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[6] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/972>

[7] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/category/tags/ncds>

[8] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/756>