

Uniting national and regional stakeholders to ensure high level commitment to UHC

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The Eastern Mediterranean NCD Alliance (EM-NCDA) and UAE Genetic Diseases Association observed the UHC Day 2018 on 12 December and organised an Universal Health Coverage Forum on Monday 24 December 2018 in Dubai, UAE.

The objectives of the forum were:

- Highlight the critical roles and contributions of regional CSOs, working along the government to enhance the NCD and UHC agenda.
- Uniting key stakeholders including academia, community leaders, scientists, and policy leaders to promote and enhance programmatic collaborations addressing regional and national responses to UHC.
- Increase regional awareness of the need to reorient health systems, with focus on PHC and life course approach to prevention and control of NCDs and mental health.
- Generation of positive regional media coverage and boost regional momentum around UHC, especially in the light of global PHC conference and the 2019 UNHLM on UHC.

A total of 21 guests joined the forum representing various sectors in UAE (government, CSOs, academia, community, youth and clinicians) and engage during discussion sharing insights, challenges, best practices and action for further improvement to achieve UHC by 2030. They recognised that the growing burden of NCD in the Eastern Mediterranean region, necessitate sustainable multisectoral actions with a strong collaboration of the CSO advocating for UHC policies and strategies.

In that context, primary healthcare is primordial, especially in UAE which has a high prevalence of diabetes, to insure prevention and early detection of NCDS. This will be possible with a transformation of the health insurance system to ensure the application of the best practices and the continuity of care. Finally, a specific emphasis on education and social mobilisation programs is needed to empower individuals and communities on those questions.

The recommendations for the EM-NCDA were: 1- To develop a press release from the regional CSOs shared with the

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medias to help disseminate the key messages on UHC. 2- To develop, in collaboration with partners, a core set of materials to be shared digitally during regional events to ensure a strong understanding of the Universal Health Coverage in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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