



## **JOINT STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL FEDERATION (IHF) AND THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE (ISQUA) ON COVID-19 RESPONSE WORLDWIDE**

### **COVID-19 Crisis: Having the Fundamental Right Will Make A Difference**

As many countries face the COVID-19 crisis with considerable uncertainty on how the virus will continue its deadly journey in the population, the headlines are now on preparing ourselves ready for the next normal situation. While it is important to recognize the work done individually and institutionally by health workers and health services to save as many as possible lives, it is also now time to put in place what will prevent a crisis of this magnitude in the future.

The International Hospital Federation (IHF) and the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQUA) share the same views on the lessons from this pandemic that should inform us on our way forward.

#### **Safety is the cornerstone for health services:**

This means not just reacting in the time of crisis, but also leveraging a safety culture that covers patients and health workers equally- the people we serve as well as the people that serve. Lack of protective equipment has potentially caused harm to both patients and healthcare workers. Health services with embedded safety culture preparedness and mitigation measures have had an appropriate response that has made a difference.

- We call for the revision of the curricula of all health professionals to include all elements of safety theory and methods to engender a safety culture, before they enter the health services workforce
- We call for health providers to have systematic continuous capacity building programs on safety for all their staff, supported by documented processes and governance mechanisms that cover all dimension of safety for all risks.
- We call for policy makers to encourage and facilitate safety while avoiding the multiplication of bureaucratic norms.
- We call for the creation of a responsive and flexible enabling environment which supports health professionals and facilities to achieve enhanced safety for all.
- We call for leaders to place the psychological safety, and physical and mental wellbeing of healthcare workers at the forefront of future planning and interventions.

#### **Multidisciplinary teamwork is critical for patient centered care:**

COVID-19 responses demonstrated the direct benefit of breaking medical and professional silos. This is in contrast to the strong resistance experienced over the past 10 years to integrated holistic care for multi-disease chronic

patients. The challenge will be to build on the crisis to enhance adoption of systematic multidisciplinary teamwork as the model for all activities.

- We call for an education model in which health professionals have systematic integrated courses to build a true sense of community
- We call for health providers to accelerate the reorganization of service delivery and with multidisciplinary and team-based decision-making processes
- We call for policy makers to remove legal barriers for multi-disciplinary and multi professional activities, while reinforcing outcome related accountability systems.

#### **Agility and innovation adoption will allow resilience in all situations:**

COVID-19 has demonstrated the extraordinary capacity of innovation and responsiveness of health providers under extreme pressures of time constraint, lack of resource and uncertainty of treatment.

- We call for the expansion of capacity building to manage multiple sources of information and complex situations in a climate of uncertainty
- We call for healthcare providers to accelerate an open, collaborative, and international adoption process for innovation, with a strong evidence base and safety focus.
- We call for policy makers to support the elimination of unnecessary legal and financial constraints to the implementation of evidence based innovative flexible solutions to achieve good outcomes for the population.

In addition to those three key recommendations, there is a long list of desirable actions to be taken rapidly. Both IHF and ISQua support these actions to address the health, social and economic challenges for the coming months. But now is the time to prioritise the building of a solid backbone to our health system to make it more resilient. We believe that combining our efforts will allow us to face all future crisis in a better way.

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#### **About the International Hospital Federation (IHF)**

Established in 1929, the IHF is an international not for profit, non-governmental membership organization with the vision of “A world of healthy communities served by well managed hospitals and health services where all individuals reach their highest potential for health.” Its members are worldwide hospitals and healthcare organizations having a distinct relationship with and contribution to the provision of healthcare. IHF provides its members with a platform for the exchange of knowledge, strategies and experience as well as opportunities for international collaborations with different actors in the health sector. IHF recognizes the essential role of hospitals and health care organizations in providing health care, supporting health services and offering education. Its role is to help international hospitals work towards improving the standard, quality and level of their service delivery to the population with the primary goal of improving the health of society. [www.ihf-fih.org](http://www.ihf-fih.org)

#### **About the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua)**

**The International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua)** is a member-based, not-for-profit community that delivers a variety of initiatives and programmes. Our mission is to inspire and drive improvement in health, and the safety and quality of healthcare worldwide.

When you join ISQua, you are investing in yourself, in addition to changing health care quality across the world. We foster a global community of passionate healthcare professionals, who are united by a single common goal: safer healthcare.

Being a member gives you access to ISQua's global community, exclusive website content, discounts to our conferences, access to the International Journal for Quality in Health Care, exclusive access to industry experts and much more. Find out more at <https://www.isqua.org/membership.html>.

ISQua has created a **resource page for COVID-19**. We have collated resources from around the world to help provide the most up to date information to the healthcare community. Here you will find links to webinars, articles, research papers, recordings, podcasts, and other research portals. These resources are updated regularly. <https://www.isqua.org/covid19-research-page.html>

***Join ISQua to improve your Knowledge, build your Network, and make your Voice heard.***