1. **Background**

In several countries University Hospital Groups have been created for sharing knowledge, information and experiences. These groups focus most of their activities on the national context and most of them are not set up as a legal entity but have been created as an ad hoc group.

At the international level there are some international organizations for medical schools but there is not yet a dedicated international University Hospital association. Considering that most University hospitals have some international activities and that globalization is expanding, the interest for an international platform for university hospitals is on the rise.

Although there are major differences between University hospitals around the world, they all have in common a 3 tier activity around care, research and education; In addition in all countries the university hospitals are the healthcare organizations providing the most advanced level of care. With such a high level of communality, University hospitals will benefit from an international platform for knowledge exchange. By participating in such a platform they will gain information that will allow them to enhance their performance and to better negotiate with their stakeholders taking into account results and evidence from others.

The creation of a new stand-alone international organization entirely dedicated to university hospitals would be a long time and resources consuming process. In addition, a new organization needs to establish relations with the major international organizations to be effective in the international scene and for that it will take some time to get known and recognized. Established in 1929, the International Hospital Federation (IHF) is a widely recognized international organization representing the healthcare organizations. For this reason, the IHF will serve as an independent body for promoting exchange between university hospitals worldwide.

2. **Missions and objectives**

The International Hospital Federation (IHF) is a recognized arena for discussion and knowledge sharing on healthcare. Furthermore, located in Geneva, Switzerland, the global hub of international healthcare activities, the IHF is already in official relations with other international organizations such as the World Health Organization, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Due to this tie to the international community, and the IHF’s reputation for excellence in the healthcare arena, the urgent need for an international platform for University Hospitals will be meet by the IHF.

A dedicated special interest group for University Hospitals will be created. This will function as a network of major University Hospitals from around the world. This group will be called the University Hospital Special Interest Group (UH-SIG).

Given the variety and number of potential subjects, the UH-SIG will start its activities with the following major themes:

- Training Support
- Research Funding
- Performance Improvement
  - Care Delivery Models
  - Patient Safety
  - Clinical Quality
  - Operational Efficiency
  - Patient Satisfaction

3. UH-SIG Membership

As a SIG of the IHF, membership is open to IHF Full and Associate Members expressing an interest and commitment to the goals of the UH-SIG. To participate, the hospital must be recognized as university or teaching hospitals in their country or are organizations representing teaching or university hospitals. Those meeting this definition will designate one primary representative to the UH-SIG. Others from the UH-SIG membership are able to participate on the listserv and can attend UH-SIG events.

4. Invited organizations and individuals

The UH-SIG can invite other organizations, including those from the corporate partnership program, to participate partially or totally in the UH-SIG’s activities. The SIG can also invite guests to attend if they are actively considering IHF membership.

Other invited organizations or individuals having duly recognized expertise can also be invited to participate to the UH-SIG activities for long term or on a topical basis. This invitation does not entitle to IHF membership benefits.

5. Governance

The UH-SIG is a special interest group of IHF and therefore it complies to the IHF Constitution. It is under the boarder governance of the IHF Governing Council representing IHF Full Members.

Each UH-SIG designated representative will have one vote. Invited organizations have no voting rights but can fully participate to all discussions.

_UH-SIG Secretariat:

UHC will serve as the UH-SIG Secretariat and will provide administrative support for the UH-SIG including meeting minutes, listserver, meeting planning and event coordination. UHC will be a permanent member of the Steering Committee and will work closely with IHF on coordination with the IHF Governing Council as required.

_Steering Committee:

The UH-SIG will be led by a Steering Committee composed of 8 to 10 members who are actively engaged in its activities. The IHF Secretariat will have a permanent seat on the Steering Committee. Members serve two-year terms which are staggered across the members with half rotating off each year. Steering Committee members may be asked to serve an additional two-year term at the discretion of the UH-SIG Secretariat and the Chairperson. Steering Committee terms begin and end at the annual IHF World Hospital Congress.

Those interested in serving on the Steering Committee can self-nominate or be nominated by another UH-SIG member. The final appointment decision will be made by the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, IHF and UHC as the UH-SIG Secretariat.
The Committee’s primary purpose is to assist in planning the annual meeting and provide UH-SIG leadership.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Leadership Roles</th>
<th>Duties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>With UHC, coordinates the annual meeting each year; presides over Steering Committee meetings; works with UHC to plan SIG functions. (1 year term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Chairperson</td>
<td>Assists Chairperson in meeting development and assumes the role of Chairperson after the term expires.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Past Chairperson</td>
<td>Provides continuity to the UH-SIG.</td>
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The Steering Committee will decide on the nature of activities that the UH-SIG will undertake, as well as the distribution of responsibilities and tasks amongst its participants.

If necessary, the Steering Committee will establish and approve bylaws which will describe its internal governance and the way it operates.

**Subgroups:**

As needed, subgroups may be formed within the UH-SIG to provide leadership on specific UH-SIG initiatives or projects (e.g., benchmarking, governance) and may meet regionally. Subgroups will report to the UH-SIG Steering Committee and be chaired by a Steering Committee representative. The subgroups may include other UH-SIG members interested in participating and, depending on the topic, outside subject matter experts could be invited to participate on a limited basis.

6. **Finance**

For qualified IHF members, there are no additional fees to participate in the SIG. Invited organizations or individuals will not need to pay membership fees but can provide both in kind and financial support in relation with the activities.

If, however, the tasks decided upon require a specific budget, the members of the UH-SIG will either directly support the costs or agree to fund such a specific budget (e.g., benchmarking projects, meetings, etc.). The budget will be fully earmarked but under the responsibility of IHF financial management. In both situations members will decide on the amounts to be raised and spent and on the modalities for sharing the costs.

7. **Activities and Projects**

Each year the UH-SIG will adopt a program of activities. The results of the UH-SIG’s activity are to be presented to the IHF Governing Council as an annual report covering the calendar year.

To support the activities, the Steering Committee will develop and adopt a project work plan covering two years ahead.

**UHSIG Listserver:**

This listserver is available to UH-SIG members and their staffs and facilitates knowledge sharing.
8. **Members’ Communication**

To be effective, the UH-SIG will rely mostly on conference calls and video conferences whenever possible. Physical meetings will be decided by members and will as much as possible be concurrent with other IHF activities. Members should approve a provisional meetings schedule for the year. A dedicated section of the IHF Website will be opened for the UH-SIG. It will present the group and project as well as activities and results. UH-SIG members will treat all sensitive subjects raised during meetings in a discrete and confidential manner.

9. **The role of IHF Secretary**

The Secretary will provide technical support to the UH-SIG but cannot grant secretarial support. The UH-SIG will rely on the IHF’s existing means of communication (i.e., events, journal and website). The UH-SIG will take advantage of the existing events under the responsibility of IHF Secretariat as the World Hospital Congress, where a session will be organized to present either progresses of the work done by the UH-SIG or serve as a platform for members to present their achievements on a topic chosen by the UH-SIG.

*The terms of engagement are adopted by the Steering Committee of the UH-SIG and approved by the IHF Governing Council. New members will abide with the terms of engagement. Revision can be made according the same process.*

**Bernex, Switzerland**
**November 2013**

*Approved by IHF Governing Council*
IHF President Signature