

Health Workforce Policies

On behalf of the **European Region** of the **World Confederation for Physical Therapy** (ER-WCPT) I am grateful for the opportunity to make this statement.

The **World Confederation for Physical Therapy** has 101 member organizations, 33 of whom are in the European Region representing over 155,000 physiotherapists/physical therapists. This professional group is the third largest group of health care workers in Europe.

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy recognizes the tension between the rights of the individual to migrate while maintaining sufficient numbers of health care personnel in the source country. As experts in exercise and movement, physiotherapists are well-placed to respond to the needs of the increasing number of older adults and individuals with chronic disease seeking health care. In a growing number of countries, physiotherapy has first contact status, a referral from a medical practitioner not being required, legally or ethically, before services are provided. Unfortunately in a number of member states, physiotherapists' skills are under-utilized due to limitations placed on their practice for a variety of different reasons ultimately contributing to problems with the provision of optimal services to individuals in need and poor practice environments. There is clear evidence globally that the current workforce shortages and the lack of positive practice environments are having a serious negative impact on the recruitment and retention of health professionals, the productivity and performance of health facilities, and ultimately on patient outcomes. In addition, in other member states a number of health care workers have traditionally been employed to carry out the

tasks that in many states are carried out by one qualified physiotherapist which is both cost and clinically more efficient.

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy believes that physiotherapists have the responsibility, through their national associations, to work with the governments and other agencies of member states to contribute to national HRH planning. Such planning should aim to ensure a balance between demand and supply for physiotherapists and a balance between qualified physiotherapists and support personnel, to facilitate the best possible level of quality service/care for the community. WCPT encourages member states to seek the professional engagement of their member organization of WCPT in HRH planning.

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) and other professional organizations are collaborating with the Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA) to undertake a campaign to improve work environments and aid in staff recruitment and retention through the development of positive practice environments.

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