

WHO Global Patient Safety Network Webinar  
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# **Patient Safety Implications during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

## **WHA73 Resolution COVID-19 response - Safety issues**

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## COVID-19 Pandemic and Patient Safety

- Covid-19 pandemic - the biggest challenge and threat to the world and the entire humanity today
- Health care systems across the world are overwhelmed, stretched and under extreme pressure
- Provision of care in highly pressurized situations or in suboptimal working environments leads to many inherent safety risks
- Thus, potential risks to patients and health workers are higher than usual under the COVID-19 pandemic
- Limited information of what is the impact on patient safety both for COVID patients and non-COVID patients, and on health workers

## Key Messages

### Western Pacific Region (Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Lao PDR)

- **Past experiences of outbreak** on Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in Singapore and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) in Republic of Korea facilitated prompt action on COVID response
- **Holistic health systems** approach and whole-government approach are critical
- **Balanced resource allocation** including staff, medical resources, essential health services and the COVID response should be well considered
- **Scope of patient safety** should be extended to staff safety, community safety, environmental safety, and even supply chain management under this emergency situation
- **Telemedicine** was useful under emergency, but safety concerns on remote prescription without face to face consultation still remain
- This pandemic response could be the opportunity to **strengthen health systems**

## Challenges to Patient Safety

Western Pacific Region (Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Lao PDR)

- Patients not visiting health facilities due to fear of COVID - higher **risk of harm** due to **delayed treatment**, among other risks
- **Fatigue**, anxiety, fear and discrimination of health workers and their families
- **Lack of** sufficient physical and psychological **support** to health workers and patients
- Preparation for the second wave of pandemic under **severe conditions** (lack of sufficient supplies and financial crisis)

# WHA73 Resolution

## COVID-19 response - Safety issues

[https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA73/A73\\_CONF1Rev1-en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA73/A73_CONF1Rev1-en.pdf)

OP4 Calls for the **universal, timely and equitable access to** and fair distribution of all quality, **safe**, efficacious and affordable essential health **technologies and products** including their components and precursors required in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic as a global priority

OP7 CALLS on Member States:

- OP7.4 Take measures to support access to **safe water, sanitation and hygiene, and infection prevention and control**, ensuring that adequate attention is placed on the promotion of personal hygienic measures in all settings, including humanitarian settings and particularly in health facilities
- OP7.7 Provide access to **safe testing, treatment, and palliative care** for COVID-19, paying particular attention to the protection of those with pre-existing health conditions, older persons, and other people at risk, in particular **health professionals, health workers and other relevant frontline workers**
- OP7.8 Provide health professionals, health workers and other relevant frontline workers exposed to COVID-19, access to **personal protective equipment** and other necessary commodities and **training**, including in the provision of **psychosocial support**, taking measures for their protection at work, facilitating their access to work, and the provision of their adequate remuneration, consider also the introduction of task-sharing and task-shifting to optimize the use of resources
- OP7.9 Leverage **digital technologies** for the response to COVID-19, including for addressing its socioeconomic impact, paying particular attention to digital inclusion, **patient empowerment**, data privacy, and security, legal and ethical issues, and the protection of personal data

## WHA73 Resolution

### COVID-19 response - Safety issues

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OP8 CALLS on international organizations:

- OP8.1 Support all countries, upon their request, in the implementation of their multisectoral national action plans and in **strengthening their health systems** to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in maintaining the **safe provision** of all other **essential public health functions and services**
- OP8.2 Work collaboratively at all levels to develop, test, and scale-up production of **safe**, effective, quality, affordable **diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines** for the COVID-19 response, including, existing mechanisms for voluntary pooling and licensing of patents to facilitate timely, equitable and affordable access to them, consistent with the provisions of relevant international treaties including the provisions of the TRIPS agreement and the flexibilities as confirmed by the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health

## WHA73 Resolution

### COVID-19 response - Safety issues

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OP9 REQUESTS the Director-General to:

- OP9.4 Provide assistance to countries upon their request, in accordance with their national context, to support the **continued safe functioning of the health system** in all relevant aspects necessary for an effective public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other ongoing epidemics, and the **uninterrupted and safe provision of population and individual level services**, for, among others, communicable diseases, including by undisrupted vaccination programmes, neglected tropical diseases, noncommunicable diseases, mental health, mother and child health and sexual and reproductive health and promote improved nutrition for women and children
- OP9.8 ....., identify and provide options that respect the provisions of relevant international treaties, including the provisions of the TRIPS agreement and the flexibilities as confirmed by the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health to be used in **scaling up development, manufacturing and distribution capacities** needed for transparent equitable and timely access to quality, **safe**, affordable and efficacious **diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines, and vaccines** for the COVID-19 response taking into account existing mechanisms, tools, and initiatives, .....





## EMERGENCY

## Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

[All info here →](#)

## COVID-19 quick links

[Scam alert](#)[Advice for the public](#)[Advice for health workers](#)[Country & Technical Guidance](#)[Situation updates](#)[Research and Development](#)

### Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Situation dashboard

This interactive dashboard/map provides the latest global numbers and numbers by country of COVID-19 cases on a daily basis.

For the latest on #COVID19 watch the WHO press conference

Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 15:00 GMT at [www.who.int/COVID-19](http://www.who.int/COVID-19)

Watch the @WHO press conference for the latest updates on the global #COVID19 response

Each Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 3pm GMT

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