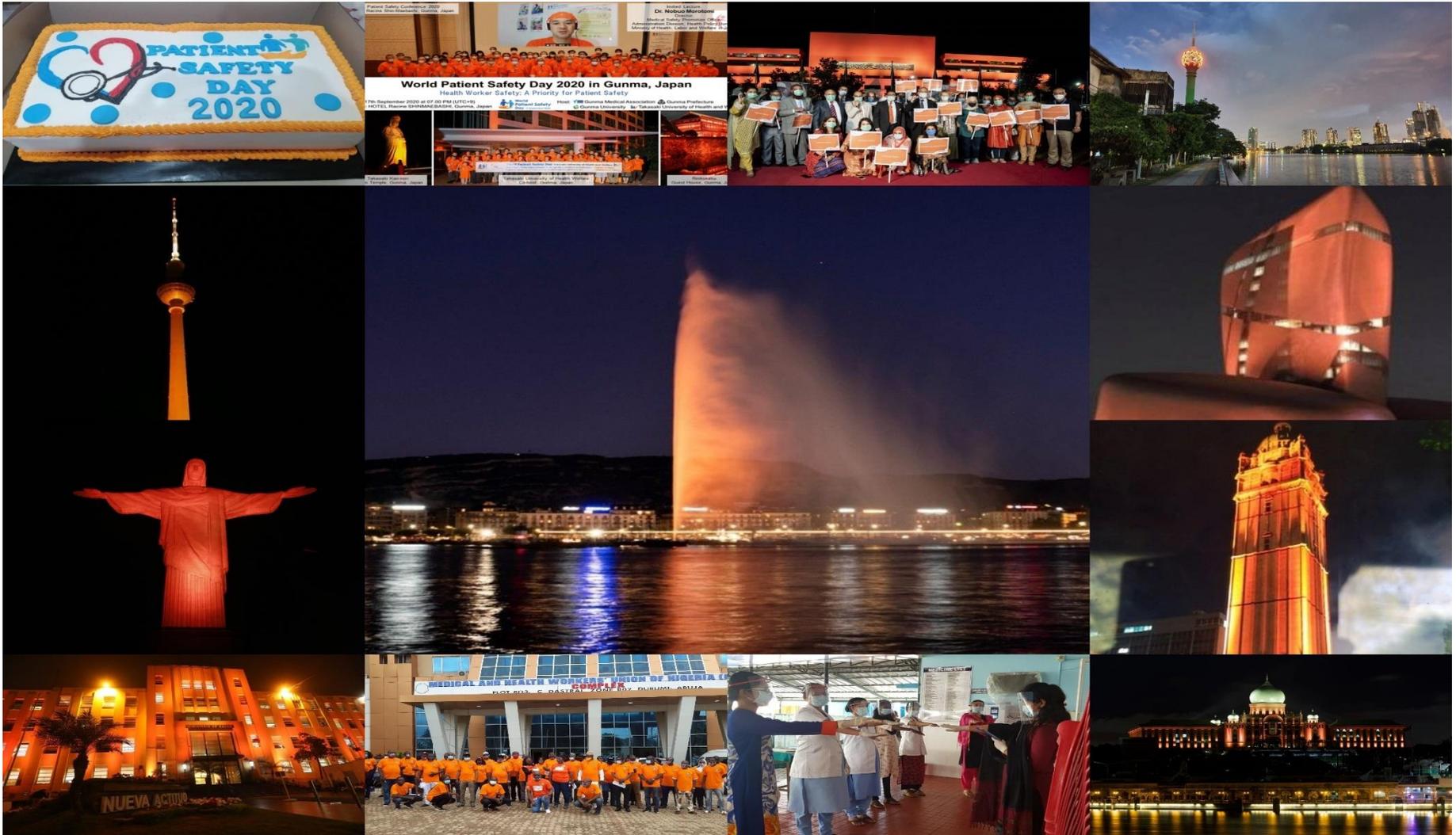


Global Celebrations of World Patient Safety Day, 17 September 2020

Summary Report



Establishment of World Patient Safety Day, 17 September

- On 28 May 2019, the World Health Assembly adopted Resolution (WHA72.6) 'Global action on patient safety'. Among the resolution's commitments was the endorsement to establish a World Patient Safety Day (WPSD) to be marked annually on 17 September.
- Objectives of the day are to increase public awareness and engagement, enhance global understanding, and work towards global solidarity and action by Member States and partners to promote patient safety.
- The first-ever World Patient Safety Day celebrated on 17 September 2019 had the theme "**Patient Safety: a global health priority**" and the slogan "**Speak up for patient safety!**". Response to the call for action was a phenomenal success where 105 countries, who reported, organized a range of high level, advocacy, educational and public engagement activities to observe the day. In celebration, national monuments and iconic landmarks from across the world were lit up in colour orange in around 80 cities.

WHO Global Campaign: World Patient Safety Day 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest threat which the entire world and the humanity is facing today, and health care is living its greatest crisis in patient safety ever! The pandemic has exerted unprecedented pressure on health systems and has highlighted the huge challenges health workers are facing globally. Working in stressful environments exacerbates safety risks, inducing errors which can potentially harm both patients and health workers. In many countries, health workers are facing increased risks of infections, violence, accidents, stigma, illness and death.

Considering the central role of health workers in the current COVID-19 pandemic response and beyond, and the huge challenges they are facing the world over, 'Health Worker Safety: A Priority for Patient Safety' is selected as the theme for WPSD 2020. The campaign focuses on the interlinkages and interdependence between the safety of health workers and that of patients.

<p style="text-align: center;">Theme Health Worker Safety: A Priority for Patient Safety</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Slogan Safe health workers, Safe patients</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Call for action Speak up for health worker safety!</p>

Objectives of World Patient Safety Day 2020 are to:

- Raise global awareness about the importance of health worker safety and its interlinkages with patient safety
- Engage multiple stakeholders and adopt multimodal strategies to improve the safety of health workers and patients
- Implement urgent and sustainable actions by all stakeholders which recognize and invest in the safety of health workers, and also as a priority for patient safety
- Provide due recognition of health workers' dedication and hard work, particularly amid the current fight against COVID-19

Bringing together patients and caregivers, health workers, health leaders, policy makers, labour organizations, patient and professional organizations, academic and research institutions, international organizations and foundations, WHO developed the global WPSD campaign, 17 September 2020 including launching the [World Patient Safety Day 2020](#) website. Several activities were planned, and educational and promotional materials were developed in all 6 WHO official languages. Examples include the campaign video, infographics and social media messages.

The call for action, “Speak up for health worker safety!” was amplified in at least **89 countries***, that observed the Day through many unique and creative activities, making it a great global success especially considering the ongoing global pandemic.

Key partners including governmental, intergovernmental, developmental, patient, civil society, professional and occupational health organizations as well as academic and research institutions all joined the cause.

Activities to observe the day

A wide range of activities were organized across the world, supporting the legacy created by the first ever [World Patient Safety Day 2019](#).

WHO Global Events

At WHO headquarters, a landmark **Charter “Health worker safety: A priority for patient safety”**, was launched on 17 September 2020 at a [World Patient Safety Day Press Conference](#) by WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in the presence of International Labour Organization Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder and Rt Hon Mr Jeremy Hunt, Chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee and Co-chair of the WPSD 2020 Steering Committee. WHO is calling on Member States and partners to prioritize and address health worker safety through adoption and implementation of this Charter. A dedicated platform to sign up for the Charter is available on the WPSD 2020 campaign website.

- [Charter “Health worker safety: a priority for patient safety”](#)
[Sign up to the Charter](#)

To transform WPSD from an advocacy tool to a platform for positive change at national, subnational and facility level, several advocacy and technical products have been launched and promoted by WHO on 17 September including:

- [World Patient Safety Day Goals 2020-21](#)
[Sign up to the Goals](#)
- [Protection of health and safety of health workers - Checklist for healthcare facilities](#)
- [Caring for those who care - National Programmes for Occupational Health for Health Workers](#)
- [Patient safety incident reporting and learning systems](#)
- [Core competencies for infection prevention and control professionals](#)
- [The Open WHO course on Occupational health and safety for health workers in the context of COVID-19](#)

*Note: referenced countries are a sampling of the countries that organized such events; therefore, the listings of countries per activity are not all-inclusive and should not be viewed as such.

WHO headquarters organized a [Global Virtual Event “One world: Global solidarity for health worker safety and patient safety”](#) to bring together international organizations and partners from around the world, showcasing initiatives and programmes in the area of health worker safety as well as patient safety. More than 850 participants from 85 countries joined the event.

The event featured country stories from **Argentina, Indonesia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Oman, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and United Kingdom**. At the event Regional Directors from five WHO Regional Offices namely - the Americas, Eastern Mediterranean, Europe, South-East Asia and Western Pacific, and Assistant Regional Director from WHO Regional Office for Africa delivered video messages on World Patient Safety Day. Furthermore, the event included stories from hospitals, universities and personal testimonies from health workers and patients from **Columbia, Ghana, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, North Macedonia, South Africa, Tanzania and United Kingdom** as well as many patient, occupational safety, non-profit and professional organizations and initiatives from across the world. Please find the [programme of work here](#).

Numerous high-level international and regional events, and webinars were organized by WHO regional and country offices, and international and national stakeholders and partners.

Media

Across the world, newspapers wrote about World Patient Safety Day and the launch of Health Worker Safety Charter. Some countries (**Armenia, Bhutan, Colombia, Ethiopia, Mongolia, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Poland**) and organizations (**Commonwealth Medical Association, Irish College of General Practitioners, World Medical Association**) issued press releases, national announcements and/or press briefings. Some organizations also published joint patient safety statements (**International Hospital Federation** and **International Society for Quality in Health Care**). Additionally, op-eds were also written to highlight the importance of investing in health worker safety and patient safety (**Canada, Malawi**).

World Patient Safety Day was featured in television news and programmes (**Armenia, Belize, Egypt, Germany, Kuwait, Libya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sudan**), in addition to radio programmes (**Pakistan, Uganda, Sudan**). Newspapers reported about World Patient Safety Day (**Cuba, Nepal, Qatar, Sudan, Zimbabwe**) as well as the scientific journals (**Australia**), even dedicating special WPSD editions (**Chile, India**). Entities in different countries produced documentaries and short films or videos (**Canada, France**) as well as educational videos (**Slovenia**). Many regional and national professional organizations produced video films (e.g., **Spanish primary care doctors and European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive care**).

Lighting up of Monuments – the signature mark of World Patient Safety Day

In solidarity, **more than 130 sites were illuminated in colour orange** for World Patient Safety Day in **more than 35 countries**. Some of these included the Jet d’Eau, Geneva (**Switzerland**), Christ the Redeemer (**Brazil**), Seri Wawasan bridge (**Malaysia**), Lotus Tower (**Sri Lanka**), Minar-e-Pakistan (**Pakistan**) and New Jinja bridge (**Uganda**). In some countries honourable Ministers lit up candles or lights to commemorate the Day (**Eswatini, Ethiopia, Liberia**). Additionally, individuals across the world illuminated their porches and gardens in colour orange in solidarity. Innovative approaches included lighting up all local radio masts (**Finland**).

Publications

During the week of September 17th, [Safer Together: A national Action Plan to Advance Patient Safety](#) was launched in the United States (**Institute for Healthcare Improvement**) and at the WHO global event, the Joint Commission International offered complimentary e-book [Health Care Worker Safety Checklists: Protecting Those](#)

[Who Serve](#). On 17 September, OECD Health joined the global patient safety movement and published two patient safety related working papers [System governance towards improved patient safety: Key functions, approaches and pathways to implementation](#) and [The Economics of Patient Safety Part III: Long-Term Care](#).

Public Events

Across the world, workshops and conferences (**Ghana, Japan, Mexico, Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom**) as well as commemoration events (**Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Italy, Uganda, Zimbabwe**) were organized with high-level political participation. The Day was observed through organization of symposia (**China, Norway, Panama**) and national virtual conferences or webinars (**Argentina, Australia, Cabo Verde, Ecuador, Finland, Honduras, Peru, Spain**)

To raise awareness of interlinkage between patient safety and health worker safety, awareness walks were organized (**Pakistan**). Organizations put orange banners outside the buildings to highlight that they are part of the movement to turn the world orange (**Denmark**). Also, there were banners inside and outside of hospitals to highlight that no one should be harmed in a health care and how health workers aren't always well protected if harm occurs to them (**Afghanistan**).

A public education and awareness-raising procession was organized in the United States, where patient safety champions carried orange signboards and displayed orange flags to bring to attention avoidable deaths in the health care system annually at national level, and a #UniteForSafeCare Virtual Event was organized on World Patient Safety Day with 5,000 unique viewers joining the 4-hour YouTube Live programme (**Patient Safety Movement Foundation**).

Events to improve health workers' well-being

To support health worker well-being, Mindful Self Care Zoom sessions were organized (**Singapore**) and podcasts on health workers' mental health and well-being were made available (**European Patient Safety Foundation**). A three-part webinar series was launched in the WHO European Region on Mental Health of the Health and Care Workforce. Countries and institutions suggested simple actions for staff to improve their own safety and well-being, and thus improve patient safety (**Ireland, Latvia, Saudi Arabia**).

World Patient Safety Day, in light of the ongoing pandemic

Some countries highlighted the ongoing patient safety and health worker safety challenges through a report (**Denmark**) and webinar (**Sudan**) addressing different ways to support safety for both patients and health care staff during a pandemic. Also, a national World Patient Safety Day conference highlighted staff safety during COVID-19 as one of the core components (**Spain**). Conferences also reflected numbers of infected health workers (**Latvia**) and just before 17 September, a report on nurses who lost their lives due to COVID-19 was launched (**International Council of Nurses**). A questionnaire was made available by the ministry of health targeted to hospitals and primary health care institutions to collect good patient safety practices during COVID-19 (**Portugal**). World Patient Safety Day was used as an opportunity to improve infection prevention and control practices (**Bahrain, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe**) and hand hygiene (**Philippines**).

World Patient Safety Day, a platform for advancing Medication Safety agenda

Medication safety was one of the technical areas that was highlighted by countries across the world. Some of the actions included the launch of an action plan to address *Medication Without Harm* (**Northern Ireland, United Kingdom**) and report on national progress in *Medication Without Harm* (**Sudan**). Presentation of national learnings from medication errors (**Morocco**), launching of "Quick Guide on Preventing Prescription Errors"

(**Malaysia**), introducing medication safety initiatives at the local level (**Ireland**), and highlighting high-risk medications (**Spain**) and *5 Moments for Medication Safety* (**Portugal**) were few key initiatives. National health authorities also pledged funds to expand digital records and e-prescribing in order to improve patient safety and medication safety (**United Kingdom**). Building on the report “Patient safety: Pharmacists’ role in ‘*Medication Without Harm*’”, which was launched in August 2020, Statement of Policy was launched on 17 September (**International Pharmaceutical Federation**).

World Patient Safety Day and the International Year of Nurse and Midwife

Different entities took the opportunity to organize events highlighting the important role of nurses in patient safety (**Brazil, India, Nicaragua, Portugal**) and the International Year of Nurse and Midwife (**Sri Lanka**). Position statements were released to highlight the importance of promoting and protecting the mental health and wellbeing of nurses and other health workers and ensuring accessibility to non-discriminatory and confidential mental health services (**International Council of Nurses**).

Patient Engagement

Several countries (**Germany, Norway, Russian Federation, Portugal, Sweden**) observed the day by designing programmes that would engage patients, caregivers, families, and communities to know more about patient safety and their role to promote it. A national ‘Patients for Patient Safety’ Programme was also launched (**India**). A conference that included a combination of physical activity and lectures from health workers was organized for patient safety champions (**World Patients Alliance**).

Visual Displays, testimonies and pledges

To celebrate the World Patient Safety Day 2020, posters were displayed on large led screens at the capital city (**Armenia**). Booklets on how to keep safe during COVID-19, were disseminated in orange WPSD canvas bags (**Japan**). Health workers displayed orange balloons and mini-flags (**Romania**) and all hospital computer screens were changed to colour orange (**Peru**). Health workers and hospitals shared their testimonies about the interlinkages of health worker safety and patient safety (**Belgium, Patient Safety Learning**). Patient safety video playlist of 45 videos with health care professionals speaking about different areas of patient safety was created for the day (**Brazil**). Health workers and leaders took a pledge (**India, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom**) or signed a banner as a symbol for standing for health worker safety (**Nigeria**).

Engagement of policymakers, workshops and recognition of champions

To enhance patient safety locally and nationally, policy makers and leaders were engaged to receive proclamations (**Canada**). Joint Declaration on the Safety of Health Workers as a priority for Patient Safety was issued (**Brazil**) and hospital executive walk-rounds were also organized (**Afghanistan**) to bring issues related to patient safety and health worker safety to the attention of health care leaders.

Interactive patient safety workshops were organized in different parts of the world (**Bangladesh, Indonesia, Panama, Russian Federation, Syria, Thailand**)

Champions were recognized in many health care settings, encouraging continued patient safety efforts (**India, Indonesia, United Kingdom**). Countries also wanted to recognize health workers and those health workers who have passed away due to COVID-19 (**Liberia, Sudan**).

Social Media

Social media campaigns were common in many countries (**Armenia, Comoros, Ecuador, Iraq, Maldives**) and in some countries, these continued for several weeks (**Scotland, United Kingdom; South Africa**). Some Ministries of Health made dedicated videos that were shared on different social media platforms to increase awareness of health worker safety and patient safety (**Myanmar, Qatar, Paraguay and Senegal**). WHO representatives in countries have also shared video messages (**Mongolia**).

Creative ideas

Same as in 2019, baking cakes with World Patient Safety Day logo was very popular in several countries (**Malaysia, Mexico, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom**) and baking carrot cakes for health workers by patients and families was also promoted (**International Alliance of Patients' Organizations**). Decorating the hospital with orange paper flowers (**Sri Lanka**) and orange lantern preparations to give these as 'thank you gift' to health worker colleagues (**Singapore**). One of the regional hospitals donated orange wool baby socks for all newborns delivered on 17 September (**Finland**). Health worker safety photo competition (**Ecuador**) and video competition (**India**) were also organized.

Wearing orange

Participants at the national World Patient Safety Day commemoration event, including the Minister of Health, wore orange ribbons (**Burkina Faso**). In many countries, health workers were wearing orange ribbons (**India, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa**), orange hats and caps (**Colombia, Ecuador**), orange clothes (**Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Poland, United Kingdom, United States of America**), orange medical masks (**Mexico, United Arab Emirates**) in addition to orange decorations on face shields (**Australia**).

Photo frames, music and dance performances

Photo frames were used by health workers to take photos in recognition of World Patient Safety Day in different countries (**Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Tanzania**) as well as orange World Patient Safety Day commitment signs (**Belgium**).

Pharmacy department created a World Patient Safety Day rap song to highlight patient safety being a priority for pharmacists (**South Africa**). Good infection prevention and control practices were highlighted through sound of music and dance performances (**Colombia**).

Students of medical studies

Medical, nursing and pharmacy students and student associations in several countries (**Egypt, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Russian Federation, Rwanda**) as well as international student associations observed the Day in various ways including through social media campaigns and seminars.

Impact at the point of care

Some countries used WPSD as a platform to generate funds which in turn were used to purchase personal protective equipment for health workers (**Malawi**). Other countries adapted and disseminated WHO training courses to all health workers such as the 'WHO open training course on Occupational health and safety for health workers' (**North Macedonia**).

WHO will be publishing a comprehensive report "World Patient Safety Day 2020: Stories from around the world" and will be reaching out soon to Member States and partners to collect further information.

Participating Member States

AFRO (21)

Botswana
Burkina Faso
Cabo Verde
Chad
Comoros
Equatorial Guinea
Eswatini
Ethiopia
Ghana
Kenya
Liberia
Malawi
Nigeria
Rwanda
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Tanzania
Uganda
Zimbabwe

AMRO/PAHO (15)

Argentina
Belize
Brazil
Canada
Chile
Colombia
Cuba
Ecuador
Honduras
México
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
United States of America

EMRO (15)

Afghanistan
Bahrain
Egypt
Iraq
Jordan
Kuwait
Libya
Morocco
Oman

Pakistan
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Sudan
Syria
United Arab Emirates

EURO (21)

Armenia
Belgium
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany
Ireland
Italy
Kazakhstan
Latvia
North Macedonia
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russian Federation
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

SEARO (9)

Bangladesh
Bhutan
India
Indonesia
Maldives
Myanmar
Nepal
Sri Lanka
Thailand

WPRO (8)

Australia
Brunei Darussalam
Japan
Malaysia
Mongolia
People's Republic of China
Philippines
Singapore

Key stakeholders and partners

WHO headquarters
WHO Regional Office for Africa
WHO Regional Office for Europe
WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia
WHO Regional Office for the Americas
WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific
WHO Country Office for Mongolia

Intergovernmental and international organizations

International Labour Organization
G20 Sovereign Sustainability and Development

Patient and civil society organizations

Aman-Saulyk, Kazakhstan
International Alliance of Patients' Organizations
WHO Patients for Patient Safety

Academic institutions

Alexandria University, Medical Research institute, Egypt
Imperial College London, England, United Kingdom
Pontifical Xavierian University, Colombia
Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists, Sri Lanka

Professional and non-governmental organizations

Institute for Healthcare Improvement
International Council of Nurses
International Ergonomics Association
International Hospital Federation
International Pharmaceutical Federation
International Society for Quality in Health Care
Patient Safety Movement Foundation
World Medical Association
World Organization of Family Doctors

Occupational health organizations

International Commission on Occupational Health

Trade unions

Public Services International

Accreditation organizations

Joint Commission International

WHO Collaborating Centres

Centre for Clinical Risk Management and Patient Safety - WHO Collaborating Centre in Human Factors, Italy
Institute of Occupational Medicine- WHO Collaborating Centre for Occupational Health, North Macedonia
Quality Assurance Directorate General Center- WHO Collaborating Centre on Patient Safety Training, Oman
Saudi Patient Safety Center- WHO Collaborating Centre on Patient Safety Policies and Strategies, Saudi Arabia

Health Care Facilities

National University Hospital Alliance for Patient Safety, Japan

Sarawak General Hospital, Malaysia

The Aga Khan Health Services, Tanzania