

**Montreux Charter on Patient Safety –
“Less Harm, Better Care – from Resolution to Implementation”**
*Launched at the “5th Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety”
24 February 2023, Montreux, Switzerland*

Context

Ministers, high-level representatives and distinguished experts from all over the world gathered in Montreux on 23 and 24 February 2023 in order to advance their joint endeavour of strengthening Patient Safety globally. They discussed achievements, challenges, priorities and necessary points of action. The summit marked another key milestone for global developments in Patient Safety.

The Ministers and other participants reaffirmed that patient harm in health care is an urgent public health issue, pertinent to countries of all income settings and geographies and therefore a shared global challenge. Patient Safety is essential for the achievement of universal health coverage and global health security.

Previous achievements

Ministers acknowledged that, in the past decade, significant progress has been achieved. This includes the preceding Global Ministerial Summits on Patient Safety which have raised awareness about burden of avoidable patient harm in health care and fostered strategic approaches to strengthening Patient Safety.

Past summits contributed in different ways:

- The first summit in London in 2016 served as the springboard for the summit series, initiating a pivotal high-level dialogue between Ministers and other key stakeholders about strengthening Patient Safety globally including through aligning policy and financial systems;
- The second summit in Bonn in 2017 univocally called for establishing a World Patient Safety Day, highlighted economic aspects of patient safety and launched the “3rd WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge: Medication Without Harm”;
- The third summit in Tokyo in 2018 positioned Patient Safety as a component of universal health coverage and called for “high level political momentum” towards the delivery of safer care everywhere;
- The fourth summit in Jeddah in 2019 put low- and middle-income countries, who face the most significant proportion of the global burden of harm, prominently on the radar and highlighted the importance of sharing lessons learned and building strategic partnerships.

Ministers also emphasised the importance of the WHO’s Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030 that is providing a comprehensive ten-year road map for strengthening Patient Safety. Furthermore, they acknowledged important national and international initiatives and the commitment and tireless work of numerous stakeholders around the world.

Spirit of the “5th Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety”

The 5th Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety in Montreux was defined by its slogan “Less Harm, Better Care – from Resolution to Implementation”. The Summit served as a catalyst for all countries to focus on narrowing implementation gaps in Patient Safety.

Ministerial debate

The Ministerial debate showed a consensus that:

- Despite progress made so far to address patient safety challenges worldwide, more effort is needed if all patients are to receive tailored care that is safe and of high quality;
- Lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis hold huge potential to build more resilient health systems and maintain safe and high-quality care, whereby Patient Safety is an essential component;
- The “knowledge gap” in Patient Safety is decreasing; thus, time is ripe to reduce the “implementation gap”;

- Interventions to improve Patient Safety are only effective if they are implemented comprehensively and on a sustained basis with appropriate oversight arrangements;
- Patient Safety interventions need to be implemented in a way that leads to beneficial outcomes for patients;
- Global collaboration, mutual learning and coordination of efforts are crucial and should be underpinned by governance at a global level.

Action points

Participants identified significant action points for Ministers, high-level policy makers and experts from all around the world as follows:

1. Treat Patient Safety as a global public health priority by strengthening implementation of Patient Safety strategies, policies and interventions;
2. Build upon the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic in actions and initiatives to strengthen Patient Safety, such as infection prevention and control and emergency human resources for health care workers. In the context of pandemic preparedness and response as well as building resilient health systems, it is essential to also focus on securing Patient Safety;
3. Deepen partnerships and collaboration on Patient Safety and mutual learning globally across a wide range of sectors, institutions and organizations;
4. Deliver against existing initiatives and actions, namely implementing WHO's "Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030" as well as ensuring the continued effectiveness of the series of "Global Ministerial Summits on Patient Safety";
5. Ensure adequate governance frameworks at international and national levels, encompassing all health sectors and settings, and defining clear lines of accountability and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders at all levels (political, financial, educational, patient, public);
6. Reinforce a safety learning culture and transparency while promoting public trust across all health care services among all stakeholders, including patients and the public;
7. Plan for sustainability; including building sustainable leadership and human resource capacities, by investing in education and training at all levels and for all health care professions, since implementing Patient Safety is a long-term commitment;
8. Engage and empower patients, families and care givers in care delivery as well as solutions to advance Patient Safety and reduce avoidable harm in health care;
9. Set appropriate priorities for Patient Safety such as medication safety, infection prevention and control and antimicrobial resistance (e.g. access and excessive antibiotic use);
10. Promote, encourage and support implementation science and research.

Next steps

Ministers reaffirmed their willingness to continue their close cooperation on strengthening Patient Safety, in the context of the "Global Ministerial Summits on Patient Safety" and in the framework of other international initiatives. They look forward to participating in future editions of the "Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety".

Montreux, Switzerland, 24 February 2023