

Agenda item 4.5 Policy on Integrated Care for Improved Health Outcomes

The *World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists* (WFSA) represents over 300,000 anaesthesiologists in 142 countries, with 24 national member societies in the PAHO region.

Anaesthesiologists perform multiple vital roles in health systems. Their expertise in resuscitation, ventilation, peri-operative and post-operative care, critical care, pain management and much more means they have the potential to influence multiple steps in the patient pathway.

As one of the few specialists working at multiple points throughout the patient journey anaesthesiologists are uniquely well positioned to provide leadership in developing equitable and integrated health systems.

As was evidenced in multiple countries during the pandemic a healthy and equipped anesthesia workforce was vital for the effective coordination and integration of stretched health services as they responded to the impact of COVID.

Unfortunately, many countries with the Americas face a chronic lack of trained anaesthesiologists. The WFSA's Global Anesthesia Workforce Survey found that 10 PAHO member states had a physician anesthesia provider density far below the recommended interim target of 5 per 100,000 as outlined in the WHO-WFSA International Standards for a Safe Practice of Anesthesia (Gelb et al, 2018).

For PAHO member states to achieve a patient focused continuity of care as outlined in the Sustainable Health Agenda for the Americas 2018-2030 there is an urgent need to develop, implement and integrate national policy and financing frameworks that will sustainably grow and support vital anesthesia services.

WFSA calls on PAHO region member states and key stakeholders to:

- 1- Engage with anaesthesiologists in the development of integrated primary health care programmes and initiatives.
- 2- Address chronic workforce deficiencies through investment in anaesthesia and critical care training and ongoing education.
- 3- Embed national surgical, obstetric and anesthesia plans into integrated national health plans and strategies.

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