



WHO Executive Board 2023  
Statement by the State of Israel

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**Item #5- Universal health coverage**

Reorienting health systems to primary health care as a resilient foundation for universal health coverage and preparations for a high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on universal health coverage

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Health systems globally face similar acute challenges that require systematic and disruptive changes, of which expanding universal healthcare is an essential component. This was true before COVID-19, and this remains the case now. Indeed, universal health coverage is crucial for ensuring the continued provision of essential services in times of emergency, as well as strengthening the health system's resilience as it confronts the longer-term consequences of the crisis.

Achieving SDG3 and other health targets requires placing the equitable provision of services at the heart of any healthcare strategy. This is particularly the case when universal health coverage is oriented towards primary care. Such an approach plays an important function in the early detection of health risks, the provision of preventative care, and encouragement of healthy lifestyles.

Having adopted universal healthcare in 1995, with the enactment of the National Health Insurance Law, Israel continues to enhance its healthcare provisions. Today, every resident – regardless of gender, religion, age, ethnic background, stage of health or income – is entitled to receive health insurance from one of the country's official HMOs on an open-enrollment basis, with no screening required for high-risk behavior. The HMOs are obligated to provide health services and obligations as defined in a National List of Health Services (NLHS) which currently covers costs of some 48bn NIS per annum.

Moreover, Israel's population enjoys equal access to a broad range of universally provided products and medications, which are listed on an annually updated state-funded Health Basket.

Israel, therefore, embraces the DG's report on universal health coverage, and concurs with the importance it places on orienting towards primary health care.