National Health Workforce Accounts

Better data and evidence on health workforce
The NHWA is a system by which countries progressively improve the availability, quality, and use of health workforce data through monitoring of a set of indicators to support achievement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other health objectives.

The purpose of the NHWA is to facilitate the standardization and interoperability of health workforce information.

The NHWA defines standardized indicators to:
- generate reliable human resources for health (HRH) information and evidence;
- enable planning, implementation and monitoring of workforce policies towards UHC; and
- improve comparability of health workforce data nationally and globally.
2. Relevance: Why would a country engage in the NHWA?

The NHWA is relevant for national, regional and global stakeholders. In particular, it enables countries to better collect, analyse and use their health workforce (HWF) data to develop evidence-based policies and plans and to support global monitoring, including SDGs, UHC and other important global commitments.

**National**
- Better understanding of the HWF characteristics, including its size and distribution.
- Strengthened human resources for health information system (HRHIS) routinely generating high-quality information and evidence to guide policy decisions according to country needs.
- Promote intersectoral policy dialogue among relevant stakeholders (e.g. ministries of health, education and finance, professional associations, training institutions, academia).
- Inform priority investments needed to strengthen HWF and support UHC.

**Regional and Global**
- Strengthened comprehensiveness, quality and comparability of HRH data over time.
- Fostered cross-country support for data collection.
- Documentation and sharing of experiences and good practices.
- Systematic research on health system developments and resilience planning.
The SDG target 3.c. aims to “substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce...” with specific indicator on HWF density and distribution. Accurate and timely HWF information and evidence will inform not only SDG 3 on health but also other SDGs such as 4, 5, 8 and 10 of the Agenda 2030.
WHO and its partners developed the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030 (GSHRH) to accelerate progress towards UHC and the SDGs by ensuring equitable access to health workers within strengthened health systems. In May 2016, the sixty-ninth World Health Assembly (WHA) endorsed the GSHRH by adopting resolution 69.19 urging Member States to strengthen HRH data and evidence with annual reporting to the Global Health Observatory and progressive implementation of the NHWA.

The report of the High-Level Commission for Health Employment and Economic Growth, adopted by the WHA resolution 70.6, recommends strengthening of HWF data, information and accountability by using harmonized metrics and methodologies, urging countries to accelerate the progressive implementation and reporting of the National Health Workforce Accounts.
Key HRH issues at country level

- Education and continuous professional development
- Information systems
- Imbalanced geographic distribution
- HWF shortages
- Migration
- Evolving HWF demography
- Regulations
- Governance
- Planning and projections
- Financing

HRH issues

4.
The NHWA can inform and optimize planning to address identified HRH issues by answering key policy questions, including:

- How to improve planning through better alignment of HWF production and needs?
- How can the HRH challenges be addressed by better resources allocation?
- How to monitor and address HWF migration?
- How to address geographical imbalances and improve access in underserved areas?
- Can the national production of health workers replace the losses caused by exits, such as retirement, mortality and migration?
Why health labour market framework approach?

The concept of the NHWA is closely aligned with the health labour market framework for UHC (Sousa et al. 2013). This framework provides a comprehensive picture of health labour market domains such as education, labour market dynamics, financing, governance, policies and regulation.
High school
Education in health
Pool of qualified health workers
Employed
Unemployed
Out of labour force
Abroad
Other sectors
Health care sector
Health workforce equipped to deliver quality health service
Universal health coverage with safe, effective, person-centred health services

Policies on production
• on infrastructure and material
• on enrolment
• on selecting students
• on teaching staff

Policies to address inflows and outflows
• to address migration and emigration
• to attract unemployed health workers
• to bring health workers back into the health care sector

Policies to address maldistribution and inefficiencies
• to improve productivity and performance
• to improve skill mix composition
• to retain health workers in underserved areas

Policies to regulate the private sector
• to manage dual practice
• to improve quality of training
• to enhance service delivery

Economy, population and broader societal drivers
Education sector
Labour market dynamics

Migration

Education in other fields
High school

Abroad
Other sectors
Health care sector

Health workforce equipped to deliver quality health service

Universal health coverage with safe, effective, person-centred health services
How is the NHWA handbook structured?

WHO and partners have developed a number of tools and guidance to support NHWA implementation at country level. The NHWA Handbook follows a modular structure aligned with the health labour market framework. It encompasses 78 health workforce indicators organized into 10 modules covering three labour market components: education, labour force and serving population health needs. These categories correspond with major types of policies required to provide safe, effective, person-centred health services. The NHWA includes both numeric and capability indicators (e.g. information on regulation or the status of the HRH monitoring and management system).
10 modules of the NHWA

**Education**
- Module 2: Education and training
- Module 3: Education and training regulation and accreditation
- Module 4: Education finances

**Labour Force**
- Module 1: Active health workforce stock
- Module 5: Health labour market flows
- Module 6: Employment characteristics and working conditions
- Module 7: Health workforce spending and remuneration

**Serving Population Health Needs**
- Module 8: Skill-mix composition for models of care
- Module 9: Governance and health workforce policies
- Module 10: Health workforce information systems
The implementation of the NHWA is a country-led activity. It builds on existing national systems and mechanisms to progressively improve country capacity to collect, analyse, use and report HWF indicators to inform policy making according to the country needs. It is a collaborative activity bringing together multiple stakeholders.

WHO has developed an Implementation Guide to help countries implement the NHWA in a sustainable manner. The guide proposes eight non-sequential steps over three phases to strengthen HRH data availability, quality, and use:

I. Conceptualization: enabling political buy-in, establishing of a multi-sectoral governance and assessing the quality of HRH information.

II. Operationalization: covering all aspects of data gathering, flow, validation and dissemination under a legal framework.

III. Process revision: revising the NHWA roll-out on a regular basis to account for changes such as in data availability or stakeholders involved.
To facilitate data gathering and use in a timely and effective manner, WHO has developed the **NHWA Online Data Platform**, which enables countries to record, analyse and visualize HWF information primarily for their own use. In addition, a **NHWA Web Portal** has been developed to display aggregated data validated by countries. This publicly available portal serves as a global public good for dissemination of globally harmonized health workforce data while also providing data to the Global Health Observatory and other global reports.

*Dashboard view from the NHWA online data platform*
How was the NHWA developed?

The NHWA was developed through a stepwise process that included several phases of consultation with experts from both developed and developing countries, including academics, national HRH and information systems experts, policy planners, experts of international organizations, and health professionals.
What resources are available?

- National Health Workforce Accounts – A Handbook
  http://www.who.int/hrh/documents/brief_nhwa_handbook/en/
- National Health Workforce Accounts – Implementation Guide
  http://www.who.int/hrh/documents/brief_nhwa_imp-guide/en/

More resources and videos are available at:
http://www.who.int/hrh/statistics/nhwa/

- Global strategy on human resources for health: Workforce 2030
  http://www.who.int/hrh/resources/pub_glostrathrh-2030/en/
  http://www.who.int/hrh/com-heeg/reports/en/

Contact us for any assistance hrhstatistics@who.int
Health Workforce Department
World Health Organization
20 Avenue Appia
CH 1211 Geneva 27 Switzerland
www.who.int/hrh