

## **CALL FOR PAPERS**

### **Strengthening the health system response to COVID-19**

Countries all over the world are mobilizing their health systems in response to COVID-19. In her recent policy brief, the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe identified 16 recommendations to strengthen health care systems to break chains of transmission and to diagnose and treat cases while maintaining essential services. In short, these recommendations are:

- expand capacity for communication and proactively manage media relations;
- bolster capacity of essential public health services to enable emergency response;
- clarify first point-of contact strategy for possible COVID-19 cases: phone, online, physical;
- protect other potential first-contact health system entry points;
- designate hospitals to receive COVID-19 patients and prepare to mobilize surge acute and ICU capacity;
- organize and expand services close to home for COVID-19 response;
- maintain continuity of essential services while freeing up capacity for COVID-19 response;
- train, repurpose and mobilize the health workforce according to priority services;
- protect the physical health of frontline health workers;
- anticipate and address the mental health needs of the health workforce;
- review supply chains and stocks of essential medicines and health technologies;
- mobilize financial support and ease logistical operational barriers;
- assess and mitigate potential financial barriers to accessing care;
- assess and mitigate potential physical access barriers for vulnerable groups of people;
- optimize protection to mitigate the impact of public health measures on household financial security;
- ensure clarity in roles, relationships and coordination mechanisms in health system governance and across government.

The measures taken in countries differ in the way, extent and order of using the above guidelines. Also, additional out-of-the-box initiatives are being implemented that complement WHO's recommendations in responding to COVID-19. Examples of these are: restaurants delivering donated meals to hospitals and hotels offering rooms to homeless people.

The purpose of this special issue is to provide a platform for sharing experiences and lessons in the strengthening of health systems and the rapid reorganizing of service delivery into new health ecosystems to respond to COVID-19 with a focus on coordination of such initiatives. Moreover, we aim to bring together submissions ranging from thought pieces to studies using primary or secondary data which address the above-mentioned topics.

Please read the guidelines for authors before submitting your paper, which can be found at <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/journal/international-journal-care-coordination#submission-guidelines>

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