

Primary health care

Policy statement

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Primary health care

World Physiotherapy advocates for the provision of primary health care that is sensitive to local cultural, socio-economic and political circumstances and provides equitable access to effective services. Individuals, their carers and communities must have access to primary health care services if health services are to be responsive to their needs.

World Physiotherapy recognises that principles of best practice exist that should be evident in any model of health services delivery, not just primary care. World Physiotherapy supports an approach that:

- is flexible and innovative, using models of service delivery that have been developed in response to an assessment of local needs, mindful of the ethical use of resources
- is developed taking account of local cultural and social norms
- is based on collaboration within and across professions, agencies and sectors (eg health, education, social welfare and voluntary organisations)
- involves local communities and individuals as partners in health service delivery, planning, operating and monitoring
- ensures that health services are equally accessible to all
- supports communities and individuals to be self-reliant
- utilises relevant evidence to ensure best practice
- has mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate services and procedures for review and modification
- incorporates health promotion, disease prevention and intervention/treatment/rehabilitation

World Physiotherapy encourages its member organisations and individual physiotherapists to raise awareness of the important role and contribution of physiotherapists in primary health care as:

- direct and indirect providers of services
- collaborative members of multi-professional teams
- consultants to governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and disabled people's organisations (DPOs)
- developers, implementers and managers of services to reduce health inequalities
- educators of other health personnel and support personnel
- physiotherapist entry level education and continuing professional development opportunities prepare and equip physiotherapists to practise in a variety of settings for both urban and rural communities. These educational opportunities ensure that physiotherapists' roles as facilitators and educators of other health personnel are recognised.(1)

World Physiotherapy encourages its member organisations and physiotherapists to work with governments, NGOs and DPOs to facilitate the development of primary health care and promote the contribution of physiotherapists.

Glossary (<https://world.physio/resources/glossary>)

Digital practice

Equity

Health promotion

Multidisciplinary

Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)

Practice settings

Prevention

Primary health care

Rehabilitation

Approval, review and related policy information	
Date adopted:	Approved at the 15th General Meeting of WCPT June 2003. Revised and re-approved at the 16th General Meeting of WCPT June 2007. Revised and re-approved at the 17th General Meeting of WCPT June 2011. Revised and re-approved at the 18th General Meeting of WCPT May 2015. Revised and re-approved at the 19th General Meeting of WCPT May 2019. Revised and re-approved at the 20 th General Meeting of WCPT May 2023/
Date for review:	2027
Related World Physiotherapy policies:	World Physiotherapy policy statements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community based rehabilitation

References

1. World Physiotherapy. Physiotherapist education framework. London, UK: World Physiotherapy; 2021 3 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://world.physio/what-we-do/education>.

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