



GLOBAL PROGRESS REPORT ON WASH IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Fundamentals first

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World Health
Organization

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for every child

Global progress report on water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities: fundamentals first

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Contents

iv	Foreword	63	Chapter 6. An investment opportunity
v	Acknowledgements	71	Chapter 7. Where do we go from here?
vii	Abbreviations	75	References
viii	Glossary	81	Annex 1. Practical steps to improve WASH in health care facilities
1	Global progress at a glance	88	Annex 2. National water estimates
5	Chapter 1. About this report	114	Annex 3. Regional and global water estimates
9	Chapter 2. Putting fundamentals first	124	Annex 4. Methodology used for tracking country progress
17	Chapter 3. Latest status of WASH services in health care facilities	126	Annex 5. Case studies
39	Chapter 4. Integration of WASH with energy and health programmes	149	Annex 6. Global health AND CLIMATE campaigns and initiatives: opportunities for impact
49	Chapter 5. Country and regional progress	151	Annex 7. Suggested actions to achieve the four recommendations

Foreword

This global progress report on water, sanitation, hygiene, waste management and cleaning (WASH) in health care facilities comes at an unprecedented moment, when coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is exposing key vulnerabilities in health systems, such as inadequate infection prevention and control. WASH services in health care facilities, so often taken for granted – or as this report highlights, outright neglected – are needed more than ever to protect vulnerable health workers and patients.

The report identifies major global gaps in WASH services: one third of health care facilities do not have what is needed to clean hands where care is provided; one in four facilities lack basic water services, and one in 10 have no sanitation services. This means that 1.8 billion people use facilities that lack basic water services and 800 million use facilities with no toilets. Across the world's 47 least-developed countries, the problem is even greater: half of health care facilities lack basic water services. Furthermore, the extent of the problem remains hidden because major gaps in data persist, especially on environmental cleaning.

This report also describes global responses. In response to the 2019 World Health Assembly resolution on WASH in health care facilities, data from 47 countries indicates that more than 70% have conducted related situation analyses, 86% have updated and are implementing standards and 60% are working to incrementally improve infrastructure and operation and maintenance of WASH services. Case studies from 30 countries demonstrate that progress is being propelled by strong national leadership and coordination, use of data to direct resources and action, and the mutual benefits of empowering health workers and communities to develop solutions together.

Despite reported progress, critical gaps remain. Only one third of countries responding to the World Health Assembly resolution have developed costed roadmaps for action, and just over 10% have integrated WASH indicators into regular national health system monitoring.

This report was launched to coincide with the 2020 International Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day,

with the theme *Protect Everyone*. Investments in WASH must be an essential part of UHC for every country. Furthermore, investing in WASH and energy services in health care facilities is one of the core prescriptions for a healthy, green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the new data in this report, we offer four recommendations to all countries and partners, particularly health and community leaders:

- Implement costed national roadmaps with appropriate financing;
- Monitor and regularly review progress in improving WASH services, practices and the enabling environment;
- Develop capacities of health workforce to sustain WASH services and promote and practice good hygiene; and
- Integrate WASH into regular health sector planning, budgeting, and programming, including COVID-19 response and recovery efforts to deliver quality services.

Implementing these recommendations requires committed and courageous leaders, communities and partners. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) remain steadfast in supporting these efforts and we call on all countries, partners and individuals to intensify their commitment and related investments.

The world can no longer afford to overlook the fundamentals.



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization



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