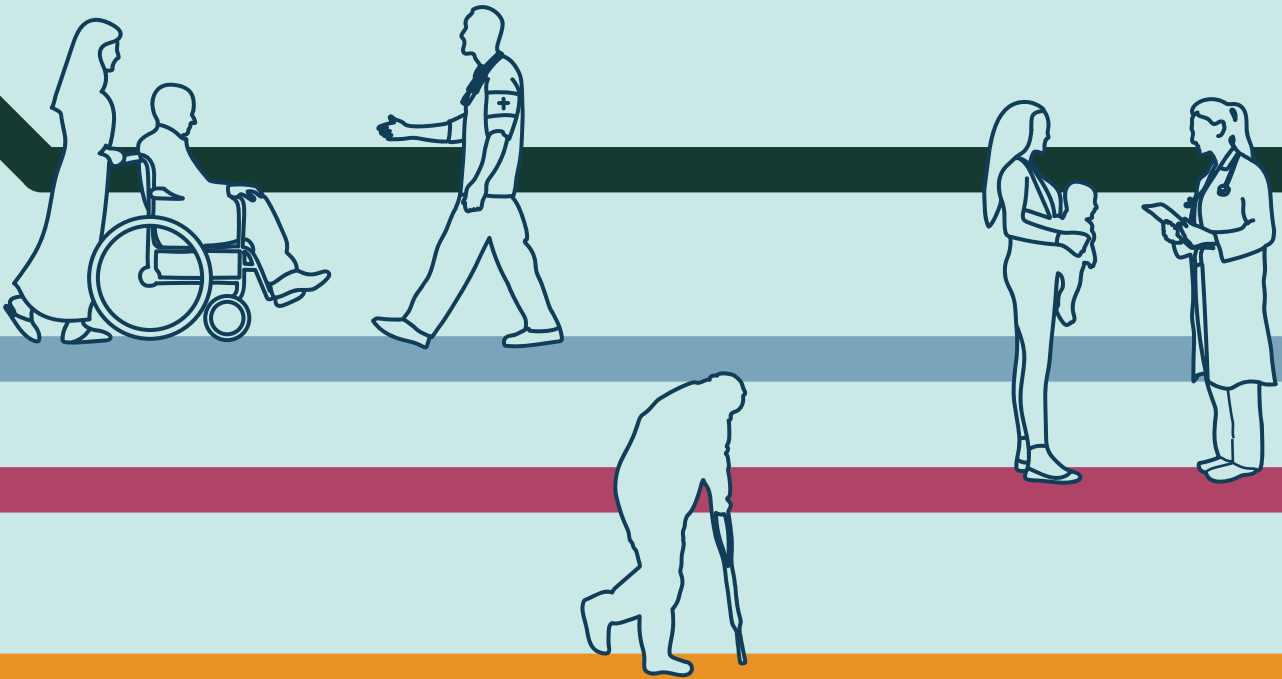




World Health  
Organization

# Refugee and migrant health: Global Competency Standards for health workers



## **WHO Health and Migration Programme**

The WHO Health and Migration Programme brings together WHO's technical departments, regional and country offices, as well as partners, to secure the health rights of refugees and migrants and achieve universal health coverage. To this end, the Programme has five core functions: to provide global leadership, high-level advocacy, coordination and policy on health and migration; to set norms and standards to support decision-making; to monitor trends, strengthen health information systems and promote tools and strategies; to provide specialized technical assistance, response and capacity-building support to address public health challenges associated with human mobility; and to promote global multilateral action and collaboration.



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# Foreword

Refugees and migrants are among the most vulnerable communities in many societies. All too often, they live insecurely on the fringes of society, in fear and without access to a reasonable level of essential services, including health services. They may face discrimination, social exclusion, negative attitudes, and stigmatizing stereotypes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted health services across the world, putting these already vulnerable and marginalized communities at heightened risk. The pandemic has compromised the ability of health systems to respond to the whole spectrum of health needs, exacerbating existing inequities.

WHO believes that everyone should be able to enjoy the right to health and access to people-centred, high-quality health services without financial impediment, including refugees and migrants, as expressed by our commitment to universal health coverage.

All countries should aspire to build strong health systems, supported by a well-trained, culturally sensitive, and competent health workforce that can respond to the needs of all people. Such health systems must be sensitive to the needs of refugees and migrants, their languages and their unique health problems. This requires comprehensive national health policies underpinned by legislative and financial frameworks.

There is a clear need for consistent standards of practice for health workers providing services to refugees and migrants. These Global Competency Standards are the first of their kind, and are designed to achieve just that. They highlight a range of competencies that can be incorporated into education and practice to help health workers to provide culturally sensitive care to refugees and migrants.

2021 is the International Year of Health and Care Workers, which recognizes the dedication and sacrifice of millions of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and thanks them for their critical role in ensuring our health and prosperity. I hope that the Global Competency Standards provides a way of supporting and encouraging health workers to improve the provision of culturally health sensitive care to refugees and migrants, enabling them to live happier, healthier lives.

The Standards will play an important role in strengthening primary care and advancing progress towards universal health coverage for all, including refugees and migrants. Successful roll-out will require the commitment of all countries to support and invest in their health workforces.



**Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**  
Director-General  
World Health Organization

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