

# PEOPLE-CENTRED HEALTH CARE

A POLICY FRAMEWORK



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# FOREWORD

Health improvements over the last century have been impressive, but health systems have reached a crucial turning point. Despite increasing health expenditures and unprecedented advances in modern medicine over the last century, people today are not necessarily healthier in mind and body. Neither are they more content with the health care they receive. Access, patient safety and quality and responsiveness of care are important and pressing global issues.

As health is influenced by a complex interplay of physical, social, economic, cultural and environmental factors, it must be seen in a broader context, with all stakeholders involved. We need to re-establish the core value of health care, which is health and well-being of all people as the central goal. This entails a more holistic and people-centred approach to health care, and a balanced consideration of the rights and needs as well as the responsibilities and capacities of all health constituents and stakeholders. Health systems, therefore, need to change.

This policy framework for people-centred health care has been prepared to help governments and other health partners in encouraging dialogue and initiating action. It was endorsed by WHO Member States during the fifty-eighth session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific held in the Republic of Korea in September 2007. The framework provides general principles and guidance for countries and areas in identifying and adapting policy reforms and interventions to their unique settings at national and local levels. It is important to realize that a carefully considered combination of measures which are mutually reinforcing will go a long way in bringing us closer to the desired goal and vision.

WHO is committed to working closely with its partners to promote people-centred health care and providing practical guidance to Member States to ensure that health policies and interventions lead to more people-centred health care, better health outcomes, and improved health and well-being.

It is our challenge and responsibility to move together in promoting this vision and to translate it into reality through our individual and collective action.



**Shigeru Omi, MD, Ph.D.**  
Regional Director

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