



Health for ALL NOW!!

People's Health Movement



## Comprehensive Primary Health Care remains an Essential Tool to Achieve “Health for All”



The Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC) approach articulated in the Alma Ata Declaration in 1978, remains as relevant today as it was 30 years ago. It recognized the need for a new international economic order if inequities in health were to be successfully addressed.

A PHC policy in 2008 needs renewed commitments that should affirm and consolidate Alma Ata and also take into account new realities.

PHM has identified new challenges that have emerged in the last 30 years and which should be incorporated in a renewed commitment to PHC.

*PHM strongly believes that:*

- Neoliberal globalization brings new threats to health such as; the increase in trade in unhealthy commodities, international trade agreements that promote the penetration of transnational corporations into the health sector, enforce patent rights that are used against the interests of poor people, and apply unfair rules in the international trade of agricultural products that devastate the livelihood and health of poor farmers.
- Selective, vertical health care programs remain dominant, and not only fragment wider health systems, but also draw away scarce resources from public health systems, treating patients as passive recipients of care and ignoring the ever-present socioeconomic and political determinants of health.
- In light of the looming health staffing crisis, the role of paid community health workers should be revisited; not only to extend coverage at the local level, but also to act as social mobilizers in the empowerment of communities.
- Increasing privatization and commercialization of health systems has undermined the role of the public sector and has often eroded standards of care among health workers whose activities may be influenced more by the profit motive than the health needs of the communities they serve.
- Poor countries have continued to lose their health workers under the current unregulated health workers' labor market. Regulation must ensure an adequate human resource base for the health systems of all countries –including compensating poor countries for their losses as consequence of migration (i.e., costs of training and opportunity costs of losing skilled staff).
- Intellectual property rules continue to make new life-saving medications unavailable and unaffordable to the people who need them the most. PHC requires universal access to essential (mostly generic) medicines.

PHM insists that PHC should be take account of but also influence the political, economic and social processes in each specific context CPHC should also be based on the fundamental concept that all citizens have rights to the conditions that create health.

### *IT MUST*

- include not only the primary level of care, but also a working referral system to secondary and tertiary levels of care;
- be adequately financed through public sources;
- ensure systems of health care provide equitable access and care according to need;
- through action across sectors public health interventions and health promotion address the social, political, economic and environmental determinants of health and not just be limited to health care;
- empower communities, especially the most disadvantaged and marginalized, so that they can act as protagonists in improving their health and their livelihoods;
- use technology in a manner that is sensitive to local needs and contexts;
- combine traditional and modern medicine to maximize benefits to patients; and
- embed policies and interventions in the human rights framework with a special focus on the rights of vulnerable groups

PHM reiterates the core principles of Alma Ata. PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN 2008 AND BEYOND, must, in addition, address these new challenges at local, national, regional and global levels. PHM reasserts its commitment to putting the health of marginalized groups as the focus of its call for 'Health for All Now' – a call made by the PHM in 2000 in its [People's Charter for Health](#).

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