



The key messages for each theme of the European Public Health WEEK 2019 are based on evidence and resources shared by a variety of sources, including:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe
- The European Commission (e.g. through the State of Health in the EU – Companion report 2017)
- EUPHA Sections, EUPHA members and EUPHANxt
- Experts from the Council of Occupational Therapists for European Countries (COTEC), World Federation of Physical Therapy – European Region (WCPT), Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) and Euro Youth Mental Health (EYMH).

Unless stated otherwise, messages refer to all 53 Member States of the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Please refer to the [media toolkit](#) for guidance on how to best use the key messages.

Wednesday 15 May - Care 4 care

Motto of the day: “Taking care of what takes care of you.”

Key messages

1. Health promotion and disease prevention pave the way for a more efficient health system and enable people to live and age in good health.
2. There is no health without a workforce, thus policy-makers should invest in health workforce development needs.
3. Multidisciplinary teams are better able to improve patients’ health, prevent disease and reduce hospitalisation.
4. At its heart, primary healthcare is about caring for people and helping them improve their health and wellbeing rather than just treating specific diseases or conditions.

5. Primary healthcare professionals have a continuing and trusted relationship with their patients and know their health history. Knowing the full picture helps improve their care and saves money.
6. A strong primary healthcare guides patients through the health system and helps avoid wasteful spending.
7. It is important to invest in the knowledge and skills of patients and their informal carers, encouraging their active participation in decision-making and self-management of diseases.
8. Technology solutions improve access to healthcare in deprived areas, enable coordination between services and help patients manage their diseases.

Other facts and figures

Health workforce

- Health workers are at risk of acquiring infectious diseases through exposure at work. They may also suffer from psychological stress, which affects both their work and personal lives.
- The nurses to doctors ratio in the EU varies from 1.1 in Bulgaria to 4.6 in Denmark and Finland.
- Health workforce imbalances and shortages are a major concern in the European Region.
- Population growth, ageing societies, and changing disease patterns are expected to drive greater demand for well-trained health workers in the next 15 years.
- The right skills-mix of health workers is indispensable for effective and efficient health care delivery.
- Health professionals have a crucial role to play in educating patients on how to take care of their health, coordinating care and advocating for their patients' needs.

Informal caregivers and home care

- The ups and downs in a patient's illness can have a deep impact on informal caregivers. It is important to preserve their physical and mental health and their resilience.
- People providing informal care deserve to feel included in society and see their full potential recognised.
- Informal care provided by family and friends will need to be supported to allow people with functional limitations to stay at home as long as possible.
- Informal care accounts for most hours of care in all European countries, even in those where the elderly care sector receives the largest public support.
- The provision of services in patients' homes is typically more cost-effective than in institutions, particularly if informal care is used effectively.

Technology and e-health

- Technology and e-Health solutions applied in the healthcare sector help to tailor services to people with complex healthcare needs, particularly those with chronic conditions.
- Technological innovation expands the number of problems that primary care can effectively solve.

Navigating the healthcare system (“Integrated care”)

- More than one in four patients across the EU visit an emergency department because of inadequate primary care.
- European healthcare systems are still designed to manage single diseases instead of complex conditions with multiple needs, particularly chronic diseases. This fragmented care is associated with over-prescribing, over-hospitalisation, and poor patient satisfaction.
- Chronic conditions such as cancer and diabetes account for up to 80% of total healthcare spending in Europe, yet only around 3% of health budgets are spent on prevention. Prevention tackles non-communicable diseases effectively.
- Deaths from major noncommunicable diseases translate into EUR 115 billion in potential economic loss each year.
- Healthcare systems need to adapt to emerging changes such as climate change, ageing population, antimicrobial resistance, new technologies, new medications and new models of care and finance.