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International Society of Paediatric Oncology

Meeting:

WHA75 Constituency statements

Agenda Item:

15. Human resources for health

Statement:

Patients require age-appropriate care from infancy to old age. Annually, 19.3 million people are diagnosed with cancer, including 400,000 under 19 years; 308,000 have a brain tumor and 90,000 receive a stem cell transplant. Fifteen million require palliative care and many need rehabilitation support. A specialized health workforce is urgently needed to provide NCD-related care in low-resource settings. Patients and families deserve an appropriate diagnosis and need quality care from a healthcare workforce trained to recognize cancers and hematologic disorders. Prompt referrals to medical specialists reduce diagnostic errors and multidisciplinary care improves outcomes.

WHO's Competency and Outcomes Framework 2022 supports health worker education and training, a critical pillar for healthcare delivery for NCDs such as adult and pediatric cancers, and including specialists in neurosurgery, stem cell transplantation, rehabilitation, and palliative care worldwide.

We welcome WHO's Global health and care worker technical guidance on management and policy actions: preventing harm, promoting inclusivity, providing support, and safeguarding rights. Safety issues are critical for professionals managing hazardous drugs, nuclear medicine and radiotherapy treatments. Health workers in oncology, neurosurgery, transplantation, physical and rehabilitation medicine, and palliative care consistently need physical, mental and psychosocial support. Additional responsibilities for COVID-19 wards have added to burnout and high staff turnover.

We call on governments to support quality, specialized training in oncology, hematology, transplantation, neurosurgery, physical and rehabilitation medicine and palliative care to achieve a local, stable and educated workforce qualified to deliver age-appropriate care inclusive of parents and families and to support progress towards successful universal health coverage.

Source URL (modified on 05/22/2022 - 10:14):

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