



## **Public Mental Health Joint Statement by WFPHA, WONCA, and WPA**

Mental health conditions (MHCs) are responsible for a large proportion of global disease burden and result in a broad range of impacts across sectors. Mental wellbeing has a broad range of impacts across sectors at individual and population level. Particular groups are at several-fold increased risk of MHCs and poor mental wellbeing.

Mental health conditions and wellbeing are determined by a complex interplay of risk and protective factors at individual, community, and structural levels.

Evidence-based public mental health interventions exist to treat and prevent MHCs, prevent associated impacts, and promote mental wellbeing and resilience. Different types of public mental health interventions are provided by various sectors, including primary care, secondary mental health care, and public health. Higher-risk groups require more targeted approaches to prevent widening of inequalities.

However, only a minority with MHCs receive any treatment even in high-income countries, far fewer receive interventions to prevent associated impacts, and there is negligible coverage of interventions to prevent MHCs, or promote mental wellbeing and resilience. Implementation failure breaches the right to health and results in population-scale preventable suffering, broad impacts across sectors and associated economic costs. Furthermore, the implementation gap has further widened since the COVID-19 pandemic. It underscores the importance of coordinated action to address the implementation gap particularly in the face of global challenges stemming from health crises, climate change, migration, conflicts, and wars.

The World Federation of Public Health Associations, the World Organization of Family Doctors, and the World Psychiatric Association acknowledge that a whole system approach is required to address this implementation failure and the universal right to mental health. They therefore commit to support collaborative working in order to improve the implementation of public mental health interventions. This will support sustainable reduction in MHCs, improved population mental wellbeing, and broad associated benefits across populations. It is time to join forces and address both the wider determinants of mental health and those of mental health conditions overcoming limitations and shortcomings of monodisciplinary approaches to mental health and MHCs.

Signed on World Mental Health Day 10/10/23

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Borisch".

Prof. Bettina Borisch  
Executive Director  
WFPHA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Stavdal".

Dr Anna Stavdal  
President  
WONCA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Danuta Wasserman".

Prof. Danuta Wasserman  
President  
WPA