
Second International Conference on Primary Health Care: Towards Universal Health Coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals Consultation on the Declaration

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In 2018, 40 years after the Declaration of Alma-Ata, Member States, people, civil society and international development partners will commit to strengthening primary health care to achieve universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals. Our collective commitment and action are required in order to achieve this goal. In this inclusive spirit, we hope you will share your comments on the new Declaration on primary health care.

Following this period of public consultation, the Declaration will be reviewed by the International Advisory Group on Primary Health Care for Universal Health Coverage on April 26-27. An updated draft Declaration will then undergo an informal consultation process with Member States in Geneva, Switzerland starting in May.

The public call for comments will be open until 12h midnight CEST on **April 23, 2018**. Thank you in advance for your input.

Together, we can achieve Health for All.

• [Draft Declaration](#)

Your contact details

Name

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Your age

56-65 [A6]

These comments represent input from a Member State

Yes [Y]

If "YES", please specify the country

New Zealand [NEZ]

If "YES", please specify the country [Other]

Organization

Naturopaths and Medical Herbalists of New Zealand (Inc)

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Please input your comments for each section of the document

Preamble

The professional association 'Naturopaths and Medical Herbalists of New Zealand (Inc)' [NMHNZ] supports the overall goals and intentions of the PAHO Draft Declaration Towards Universal Health Coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals, although would like to see more emphasis on systems of Traditional and Complementary Medicine (T&CM) placed throughout this document (please see discussion below).

NMHNZ is the only naturopathic professional association in NZ and a member of the World Naturopathic Federation. We have a shared vision of highest education and practice standards and appropriate regulation and recognition of naturopathy / naturopathic medicine for prevention, health maintenance and support for chronic health conditions and palliative care.

I. Primary health care is essential achieving Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals:

We agree with the statements: "The ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 depends on the political will to strengthen a primary health care approach in all countries" and "Universal health coverage based on primary health care is a critical element for the reduction of poverty, improved nutrition, education, gender equality and empowerment, productive employment and economic growth, healthy cities and settlements" and "The role of primary health care in promoting intersectoral action is essential to the attainment of these interdependent goals".

Naturopathic principles are in alignment with goals of "reduction of poverty, improved nutrition, education, gender equality and empowerment, productive employment and economic growth, healthy cities and settlements".

II. Primary health care is essential to improve health:

We agree with the statement "Achieving health for all is dependent upon involving the whole of society in the development process, decisive action on all determinants of health, an inclusive and intersectoral approach, and a people-centred health system".

Systems of traditional and complementary medicine, (T&CM) namely: naturopathy (developed from Traditional European medicine), Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda and Unani are people centred health systems. Naturopathy has a long and established history of public use, growing evidence of efficacy, are educative in nature with a focus on patient/community empowerment for maintaining and improving health and prevention of disease and offers cost reductions in health care and should therefore should be a focus in any global and national primary health care strategy to achieve these goals.

III. Primary health care is essential to the success of and sustainability of health systems:

We agree with the statements “Health systems focused on quality primary health care improve health equity, coverage of services, cost effectiveness and efficiency, and people’s experience of care compared with those that over emphasize specialty care” and “progress requires a reorientation of health systems away from overemphasis on curative care, disease-specific programs, highly-specialised services, and commercialization. The unregulated expansion of the private sector, fragmentation of services, less access to care for those who need it most, rising costs and over-medicalization must be reversed”.

T&CM systems of health care are particularly suited to meeting this goal. Systems of T&CM address the whole person, physical, nutritional, social, and environmental contributing factors, as opposed to prescription of isolated treatments of acupuncture, herbal medicine, homeopathy, vitamins and minerals for a one-off curative band-aid approach that are likely to fail to have a sustained impact on whole person health care. All T&CM health systems have their established philosophies upon which prescription is based.

In terms of naturopathy the seven guiding principles of patient centred care are:

- ☑ “The healing power of nature (*vis medicatrix naturae*)
- ☑ Treat the whole person (*tolle totum*)
- ☑ Treat the cause (*tolle causam*)
- ☑ First do no harm (*primum non nocere*)
- ☑ Naturopathic doctor as teacher (*docere*)
- ☑ Health promotion and disease prevention
- ☑ Wellness” (WNF 2017, p.1).

Naturopaths conduct health assessment through detailed case taking, standard biomedical physical examination and traditional assessment techniques of tongue, hair, skin and pulse in determining contributing agents, such as environmental pollutants, lifestyle and social factors, genetic, external or medical interventions (WNF 2017).

Naturopaths are trained in pathophysiology, detection of red flags and referral, and are experienced in mobilizing patient self-empowerment to effect positive change. Over prescription of antibiotics and pharmaceutical prescriptions can be reduced, optimal preventative measures introduced, support provided in chronic and palliative health care through education and judicious use of naturopathic modalities prescribed by well-educated naturopathic practitioners in accordance with individualized whole person health care: “clinical nutrition, diet modification/counselling, applied nutrition (use of dietary supplements, traditional medicines and natural health care products), herbal medicine, lifestyle counselling, hydrotherapy, homeopathy including complex homeopathy, physical modalities based on treatment modalities taught and allowed in each jurisdiction including yoga, naturopathic manipulation, muscle release techniques” WNF 2017, p.2) or massage, mind-body techniques and in some jurisdictions acupuncture, intravenous therapies and prescription of restricted products.

Current primary health care could be more appropriately targeted to where true need is required and therefore reduction of health care costs, as opposed to everyday health situations that are amendable to less drastic more affordable measures.

We are in agreement with this statement and the inclusion of T&CM in the statement below:

“the attributes of high quality primary health care, fit for the 21st century, are universal: (1) it addresses the health problems of individuals in the context of their family circumstances, their social and cultural networks, and life in the local community (2) it is geographically and financially accessible, making it people’s first access point to the health system for most needs; (3) it provides context-appropriate comprehensive care for the majority of health needs people experience throughout their lives; (4) it is the foundation to integrated service delivery, coordinating with other levels of services and other sectors including specialized care, acute inpatient care, long term care facilities, traditional and complementary medicine, public health and social services; (5) it is continuous, enabling enduring and empowering relationships between people and their providers and promoting self-care; (6) it is people-centred, respectful of and responsive to individual and social preferences, needs, goals and values, and sees the individual as a whole, within their biological, psychological, and community context”.

Naturopathic medicine is ideally placed to meet this intersectoral goal with governments’ support and “appropriately financed national and sub-national health policies, strategies and plans” that include regulation, training and resourcing to achieve appropriate education and clinical practice standards for quality assurance, and to support intersectoral evaluative research, to provide for effective and cost-effective health care strategies.

Governments:

To achieve this goal governments’, need to regulate T&CM in terms of scope of practice and natural health products (in a cost-effective manner) to ensure public safety and trust, and to provide appropriate resources to T&CM health systems to support robust education and practice standards and enable and promote intersectoral participation in these primary health care objectives.

People, including civil society:

We agree with the statements a,b,c:

a. capitalize on the opportunities, knowledge, skills and resources to be articulate and to empower self-carers, informal carers and co-producers of health

These are activities naturopathy is already engaged in through community classes taught around the world

b. use their voice to fulfil their role in social accountability and participatory governance of health services including their role in national and sub-national policy formulation and planning

Currently in New Zealand (and many countries of the world) naturopathy sits outside mainstream health care (unregulated) and in such a situation the benefits to health services, national and sub-national policy making is unrealized.

c. utilize, demand and advocate for high quality primary health care within a transformed health system

Naturopaths currently empower their clients to take responsibility for their health but because naturopaths are unregulated, have limited access to laboratory testing and no access to client health records the public are at risk as hospitals/doctors do not have access to naturopathic records. A transformed system would be inclusive of naturopathic medicine, provide greater access to laboratory testing by naturopaths and allow for client/patient medical records to be updated with naturopathic treatments prescribed.

The international community, including UN organizations, funding agencies and donors:

NMHNZ supports the current collaborative study being conducted by the World Naturopathic Federation Professional Mapping Committee to examine policy, framework and infrastructures that impact education and regulation of naturopathy <http://worldnaturopathicfederation.org/wnf-professional-mapping-committee/> with a view to encouraging integration of the system of naturopathy into wider health care and meeting WHO, UNICEF and UN objectives.

If you have any general comments on the Declaration, please provide them below:

We would request that naturopathic medicine and other systems of traditional and complementary medicine have more of a focus in primary health care policy development at a international and national level.

We are interested in hearing how you will be part of the movement. Consider sharing your personal commitment to primary health care and universal health coverage here. (Please note these comments will not be used to edit the draft declaration.)

Our professional association has made initial contact with a government official and will make further contact in the near future with aim to regulate naturopathic practitioners and natural products to increase public safety and as a forerunner to future integration into the wider health care system.

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