

A Declaration of U.S. Health Collaborating Centers

April 28, 2020

We are from institutions across the United States designated as Collaborating Centers with the World Health Organization (WHO). We work on infectious diseases like COVID-19 and other public health issues, such as healthy housing, occupational health and safety, tobacco, and many other determinants of health.

At a time when nations around the world are struggling with the current pandemic, President Trump's attempt to withdraw funding from WHO will harm us all. This is not the time to take the tires off the ambulances; we need more ambulances!

We call on the president and Congress to restore and increase funding for WHO immediately.

The Collaborating Centers and the institutions where they are located typically donate time, expertise, and other resources to improve health around the globe. The WHO is needed to coordinate this massive effort.

In addition to increasing testing, training, research, and capacity to respond to the current pandemic, we have worked with WHO to address other related matters. For example, with all of us spending more time in our homes, we have helped WHO craft its new guidelines to ensure that those homes are both healthy and safe. We have advanced occupational health and safety to protect workers who are placed in harm's way as they do their jobs. We have provided critical guidance on medical devices (including ventilators) and their use, specifications, and procurement (primarily for the Americas). We have helped to respond to health inequities, food insecurity, and many other areas of need that have become even more pronounced during this pandemic.

We have worked on public health ethics, including the 2015 WHO training manual, *Ethics in Epidemics, Emergencies and Disasters: Research, Surveillance and Patient Care*. We have contributed to a monitoring and evaluation system to track COVID-19 response activities in the African region.

We have collaborated to reduce the toll of non-communicable diseases, including tobacco and to support implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. We have sought to improve the health of older adults through research and training. We have increased access to care for the underserved, including rural, urban, and incarcerated populations. We have improved safety, quality, and effectiveness of traditional and complementary medicine in primary health care.

All these activities have benefited the United States, as well as other countries.

Now more than ever, we need WHO to carry out its mission. Now is not the time to get in the way and point fingers. Now is the time to do all we can to find solutions.

Mr. President and Members of Congress, you have the power to help citizens around the world and here in the U.S. who are struggling with this virus and many other health challenges. Please support the mission and capacity of the World Health Organization.

The opinions expressed here are those of the authors, not the World Health Organization. Institutions are listed for identification purposes only.

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