Health Professionals for a New Century
An international perspective

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Summary

• 20th century health professional education is out-dated;

• it does not adequately serve population health needs today.

• therefore, health professional education needs reform.

• Could the WHO Global Code for the International Recruitment of Health Personnel provide an international legal framework for implementing the proposed health education reforms?
Outline

• An international perspective

• *Global health workforce crisis and health systems*

• The case for health professional education reform

• *An international legal framework for implementing the reforms*
The nature of health in the 21st century

- Health, a national-global issue
- National health security linked to trans-national threats.
• health workforce is central to sustainable health systems
Geographical distribution of the health work-force

Disease burden vs health expenditure; size of dot proportional to expenditure levels (WHR 2006)

- Under investment in education - ~2% of global health
- 2420 medical schools; ~389,000 graduates; 7 billion people
The case for health professional education reform

Health professional education today
i. based on outdated 20th century curricula
ii. produces inadequate numbers of poorly-equipped professionals
iii. with skills irrelevant to the communities they serve

• Hence the need to reform health professional education
Health professional education for a new century

• Balance population health needs, with demand & supply of health professionals
• Scale-up education to increase quantity, quality and relevance of skills mix.
• Produce health professionals with skills relevant to the communities they serve
The systems approach

- People’s needs in both education and health should translate into demand for education and health services

Frenk et al., The Lancet (2010)
The WHO Code: an international legal framework for health professional education reform?

- The WHO Code is a dynamic text that can be updated
- Potential to create synergies with recommendations for health professional education reform
The Code’s principles and education reform

• Health systems sustainability requires planning, education and training

• Member States should collaborate in human resource development and training.

• Training should be aligned with disease profiles of countries
Implementing health professional education reform

- The 4 pillars of the Code’s implementation strategy

1. **Support at regional & country level**
   - Development of guidelines for code monitoring & implementation
   - Partnerships
   - Resource mobilisation
   - Communication & advocacy
Stakeholders in health professional education reform

- a multisectoral approach in national health & development policies
- managing fragmentation- harmonise in line with the Paris Declaration on AID effectiveness (EB128.R9 Norway/Japan)
The Code’s potential value to the implementation of health professional education reforms

• Could reduce proliferation of international legal instruments and duplication of efforts.

• Could provide a framework for managing fragmentation

• Could provide a framework for developing global standards on health professional education in a context-specific manner.
Reforming health professional education for a new century

• In implementing health professional education reforms

• The WHO Global Code on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel might provide a useful international legal framework