



## Over 40 million Health Professionals Urge G20 Leaders to Put Public Health at the Core of Covid-19 Recovery

*This letter is supported and promoted by the [Global Climate and Health Alliance](#), [Every Breath Matters](#), and the [World Health Organization](#) in service of the global medical and health community.*

**Tuesday, May 26, 2020** — Over 40 million nurses, doctors and other health professionals from 90 countries, including many working on the frontlines of the Covid-19 pandemic, sent [a letter](#) today to G20 leaders urging them to put public health at the centre of their economic recovery packages, to help avoid future crises and make the world more resilient to them.

In the biggest health community mobilisation since the [run-up to the 2015 Paris climate agreement](#), over 350 healthcare groups representing health professionals — including the World Medical Association, the International Council of Nurses, the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation, the World Organization of Family Doctors and the World Federation of Public Health Associations — signed the letter on behalf of their members, along with thousands of individual health professionals.

The letter asks governments to prioritise investments in public health, clean air, clean water, and a stable climate in the economic stimulus packages currently under consideration. Such investments would reduce air pollution and climate-warming emissions, which damage human health, build greater resilience to future pandemics, and simultaneously create more sustainable jobs, it says.

To achieve this healthy recovery, leaders of the G20 countries must involve their healthcare and scientific community in developing the stimulus packages. These stimulus decisions must also take into account medical and scientific assessments of how the measures will impact public health in the short- and long-term.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed healthcare professionals to death, disease and mental distress at levels not seen in decades. The scale of this pain could have been at least partially mitigated by adequate investments in pandemic preparedness, public health and environmental stewardship, the letter states.

Leaders must learn from these mistakes and recover in a way that makes the world stronger, healthier, and more resilient, the health professionals say. Governments have the power to make this transformation in the next 12-18 months, depending on where and how they direct the trillions of dollars they are about to inject into the economy. International summits this year give world leaders the opportunity to jointly set public health at the core of all recovery efforts, including the G7 summit on June 10, the European Council on June 18-19, the IMF-World Bank meeting on October 16-18 and the G20 summit on November 21-22.

As Covid-19 has made clear, the economy suffers when human health is compromised, the health professionals say. Their message is that a science-based approach to a healthy recovery from Covid-19 must lead to decisions to reduce both air pollution, which weakens the lungs, hearts and other organs, and greenhouse gas emissions, which cause drought, extreme heat, flooding, wildfires and other life-threatening disruptions.

A healthy recovery requires governments to invest in sustainable and innovative industries, jobs, food production and food supply chains. In doing so, the health professionals say, leaders will encourage healthier diets, more renewable energy, more walking, cycling and zero-emissions public transport, a radical regeneration of trees and nature and other changes that will underpin human, economic and planetary health well into the future.

#### **Quotes:**

**Dr. Miguel R. Jorge, President, World Medical Association:** *"Health professionals are at the frontlines of this emergency, and we are seeing the immense loss of lives because of acting too late. We know now more than ever that healthy lives depend on a healthy planet. As we walk on the road to recovery, we cannot ignore that we need to build a system in place that will protect us from further damage. That is why it is important that governments take into consideration public health when they are discussing recovery packages. We need a comprehensive approach; a healthy and green recovery and we need it now."*

**Annette Kennedy, President International Council of Nurses:** *"Covid-19 has forced the world to pause and take stock, providing us with a unique opportunity to make changes that will benefit the planet and all the people on it. Climate change poses an imminent and serious threat to the health of the world's population. We are calling on governments to make sure that pollution levels do not return to previous levels, so that our children and grandchildren will be able to grow up healthily in a liveable and sustainable climate. It may be the only chance we have for anything positive to come out of the Covid-19 pandemic, and to let this opportunity slip by would be unforgivable. ICN's members understand that there is a direct correlation between future preparedness, investment in health services and climate change. Only by investing in both healthcare and the environment can we create a sustainable future."*

**Jeni Miller, Executive Director, Global Climate and Health Alliance:** *"A healthy recovery recognises that human health, economic health and the planet's health are closely connected; the pandemic has demonstrated that economic recovery must be achieved in ways that strengthen our global health resilience. When paving out national recovery plans with the investment of vast amounts of public funds, governments must keep sight of these crucial relationships, and they must not give in to pressure from corporations to weaken environmental standards, which will have direct impacts on human health. This is not the time to go back to business as usual, it is a time to take bold steps forward to create a future that protects both people and the planet."*

**Dr. Maria Neira, Director of Climate Change, Environment, and Health at the World Health Organization:** *"It is inspiring to see the millions of nurses, doctors, and health workers, who are leading us through this defining health crisis of our time, equally speaking up to call for a healthy long-term recovery from Covid-19. Their letter to G20 leaders is fully in line with the WHO manifesto for a healthy and green recovery, namely: 1) Protect and preserve the source of human health: Nature. 2) Ensure essential services, from water and sanitation, to clean energy in healthcare facilities: 3) Invest in the energy systems of the future, not the past. 4) Build healthy, liveable cities. 5) Promote healthy, sustainable diets. 6) Stop using taxpayer's money to fund pollution."*

**Prof. K Srinath Reddy, President of the Public Health Foundation of India:** *"Covid-19 highlights the dangers of wanton ecological despoliation that creates conveyor belts for viruses mostly contained within wildlife to become virulent pathogens for the human race. Air and*

*water pollution erode our ability to withstand their invasion, because of lowered innate immunity and pre-existing damage to health that amplifies the harm that the virus can inflict on us. It is a primer in environmental health lessons and a cautionary tale from which we must gain insights on how we reshape our future. If harmony with nature is broken, we are left with harm. Let us wisely co-exist to exist."*

**Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders, first woman President of Ireland, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights:** *"I echo the sentiment of health professionals around the world: re-building a healthy society means taking real and lasting action on the climate crisis. Covid-19 has shone a light on the interconnectedness of our shared vulnerabilities and demonstrated beyond doubt that public health and the protection of our planet are inextricably linked."*

**Fiona Armstrong, Founder and Executive Director, Climate and Health Alliance, Australia:** *"National governments must ensure their economic stimulus packages designed to lead us out of the Covid-19 health crisis don't lead us directly into a new one. This means investing in clean renewable energy, active and public transport, and nature conservation, not in polluting fossil fuels that risk further harming our health. As governments have listened to health experts and trusted the science in response to the Covid-19 health crisis, they must do the same for the climate crisis. Our health depends on it."*

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<b><u>Organisation or association name*</u></b>	<b><u>Country*</u></b>
<b>ABRASCO - Associação Brasileira de Saúde Coletiva</b>	<b>Brazil</b>
<b>AerztInnen fuer eine gesunde Umwelt</b>	<b>Austria</b>

<b>Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>American Public Health Association</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>American Society of Cataract &amp; Refractive Surgery</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>Ärztinnen und Ärzte für Umweltschutz/Médecins en faveur de l'Environnement</b>	<b>Switzerland</b>
<b>Associação Nacional de Estudantes de Medicina (ANEM-Portugal)</b>	<b>Portugal</b>
<b>Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN)</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>Association of Surgeons of India</b>	<b>India</b>
<b>Australasian Epidemiological Association</b>	
<b>Australian Association of Social Workers</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>Australian Medical Association</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>Australian Medical Students' Association</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>Brazilian Thoracic Society</b>	<b>Brazil</b>
<b>British Medical Association</b>	<b>UK</b>
<b>Canadian Federation of Medical Students</b>	<b>Canada</b>
<b>Canadian Medical Association</b>	<b>Canada</b>
<b>Cardiology Society of India</b>	<b>India</b>
<b>Clinicians for Planetary Health</b>	<b>International</b>

<b>CODA</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</b>	<b>UK</b>
<b>Conseil des médecins, dentistes et pharmaciens (Council of doctors, dentists and pharmacists)</b>	<b>Canada</b>
<b>CQMF – Collège québécois des médecins de famille</b>	<b>Canada</b>
<b>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Verhaltenstherapie (DGVT) e.V.</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>Deutsche Psychotherapeuten Vereinigung (DPtV) (German Psychotherapists Association)</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>Deutscher Pflegerat e.V. (DPR) (German Nursing Council)</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN)</b>	<b>Europe</b>
<b>European Respiratory Society</b>	<b>Europe</b>
<b>Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI)</b>	<b>India</b>
<b>FIMS- Federation of Israel Medical Students</b>	<b>Israel</b>
<b>German Society of Internal Medicine</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>Global Green and Healthy Hospitals</b>	<b>International</b>
<b>IMANA (Islamic Medical Association of North America)</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>Indian Academy of Paediatrics</b>	<b>India</b>
<b>Indian College of Allergy, Asthma and Applied Immunology (ICAAAI)</b>	<b>India</b>
<b>Indian Medical Association</b>	<b>India</b>

<b>Indian Radiological and Imaging Association-IRIA</b>	<b>India</b>
<b>Indian Society of Anaesthesiologists</b>	<b>India</b>
<b>Indonesian Rural and Remote Doctor Association</b>	<b>Indonesia</b>
<b>International Association of Applied Psychology</b>	<b>International</b>
<b>International Association of Dental Students</b>	<b>International</b>
<b>International Council of Nurses</b>	<b>International</b>
<b>International Federation of Medical Students' Associations</b>	<b>International</b>
<b>International Federation of Medical Students' Associations - Brazil</b>	<b>Brazil</b>
<b>IPPNW Germany (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War)</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>ISDE, Associazione Medici per l'Ambiente</b>	<b>Italy</b>
<b>Japan Medical Association</b>	<b>Japan</b>
<b>Maharashtra Association of Surgeons of India</b>	<b>India</b>
<b>Marburger Bund Berlin Brandenburg</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>Medical Students Association of India</b>	<b>India</b>
<b>National Medical Association</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>National Student Nurses' Association</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>Paediatric Association of India</b>	<b>India</b>

<b>Pakistan Medical Association</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>
<b>Physicians for Social Responsibility</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>Progressive Doctors</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>Psychologists / Psychotherapists for Future</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>Romanian College of Physicians (Colegiul Medicilor din România)</b>	<b>Romania</b>
<b>Royal College of Surgeons of England</b>	<b>UK</b>
<b>Rural Seeds</b>	<b>International</b>
<b>Sindicato dos Nutricionistas do Estado de São Paulo (Union of Nutritionists of the State of São Paulo)</b>	<b>Brazil</b>
<b>Sociedad Española de Medicina Familiar y Comunitaria (Spanish Society of Family and Community Medicine)</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>Sociedade Brasileira de Medicina de Família e Comunidade</b>	<b>Brazil</b>
<b>Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)</b>	<b>Europe</b>
<b>The Swedish Medical Association</b>	<b>Sweden</b>
<b>UK Health Alliance on Climate Change</b>	<b>UK</b>
<b>Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>WONCA Rural South Asia</b>	<b>International</b>
<b>World Federation of Public Health Associations</b>	<b>International</b>

**World Health Professions Alliance**

**International**

**World Medical Association**

**International**

**World Naturopathic Federation**

**International**

**World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA)**

**International**

**World Psychiatric Association**

**International**