



IAPO Intervention: 4.3, Strategy for Universal Health Coverage
53rd Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization and the 66th Session of the
Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas

Thank you Chair,
Honourable members of the Assembly, distinguished delegates.

The International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO) is an alliance of patient groups that represents the interests of patients worldwide. We have almost 250 member organizations based in more than 65 countries covering 60 different diseases and conditions, and representing an estimated 365 million patients.

IAPO welcomes the political commitment of governments to universal health coverage however more needs to be done to follow-through on this commitment, and this need is growing more pressing as we consider post-2015 development goals. We know from our member organizations that many experience a lack of commitment and inadequate funding for universal health coverage in their home countries. Members report that healthcare is often unaffordable for patients and their families and there are disparities in access to healthcare.

IAPO is working with its members and partners to develop principles of universal health coverage from a patient perspective. We believe these principles need to be the core components of health systems and we call on all governments and delegates attending the WHO Regional Committee to consider these principles in the context of the agenda items under consideration and the importance of these fundamental principles to ensure affordable, high quality and equitable access for all their citizens.

In Latin America, 32 members of IAPO have signed a letter to the Director of PAHO calling for implementation of universal health coverage and patient-centred healthcare in the public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The principles governing universal access to health coverage are based on:

- **Accessibility**
- **Equity, for fair and impartial access to healthcare**
- **Quality**
- **Patient-centredness**
- **Empowerment**
- **Collaboration**
- **Sustainability and value**
- **Accountability and transparency**

We ask delegates to remember that as we move forward in developing and delivering universal health coverage work, all policies, programs, and strategies must be based on the fundamental right to patient-centred healthcare as outlined in IAPO's Declaration on Patient-Centred Healthcare.

Thank you for your attention.