



**Quality of care: kick-off technical workshop
and country coordination meeting
Almaty, Kazakhstan
3–5 April, 2017**

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Scope and purpose

Background

Over the past three decades, quality of care has evolved from a notion of human error and negligence to a widely accepted understanding that it is a core dimension of well-performing health systems. Overtime, through seminal work by key players, including WHO, notably the 2002 report, *A background for national quality policies in health systems*¹, multiple themes, schools of thought and approaches have surfaced, each contributing to the collective discourse on quality of care and its solidified importance for improving health outcomes.

This evolution of concepts has been paralleled by the ever-changing context of health and subsequently, a shifting model of care, transitions in the general architecture of health systems and new and changing roles for actors in the health sector. Trends include changing demographics and epidemiology, a context of economic scarcity, increasing patient expectations, and the accelerated use and growing potential of information systems, new technologies and medicines. In this context, the need for renewed thinking on quality of care has becoming increasingly pertinent.

Throughout, global policies have consistently raised the importance of quality of care, recognizing quality as a central topic in the Sustainable Development Goals specifically target 3.8 on universal health coverage², as well as integral to improving health outcomes across thematic programmes. Most recently, the endorsement of a global framework on people-centred and integrated health services³ and approval of the European Framework for Action on Integrated Health Services Delivery (EFFA IHSD)⁴ in the European Region, signal the continued commitment of Member States to uphold the principles of a primary health care approach and its vision for quality services.

At present, in the context of the above commitments, the WHO European Centre for Primary Health Care in Almaty, Kazakhstan, working to take forward the implementation of the EFFA IHSD, has embarked on a renewed quality of care agenda. This work aims ultimately to strengthen our technical assistance in countries and a common accountability framework for strengthening the governance of quality of care.

¹ Shaw CD, Kalo I. A background for national quality policy in health systems. WHO: Copenhagen, 2002
<http://www.euro.who.int/document/e77983.pdf>

² Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York: United Nations Sustainable Development; 2015 (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>).

³ Framework on integrated, people-centred health services. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2016 (A69/39; http://apps.who.int/gb/e/e_wha69.html).

⁴ Strengthening people-centred health systems in the WHO European Region: framework for action on integrated health services delivery. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2016 (http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/315787/66wd15e_FFA_IHSD_160535.pdf?ua=1).

Rationale

This first technical workshop and country coordination meeting is planned to convene a small group of representatives from countries, experts and WHO staff in a first brainstorming, review and planning exercise in the context of rejuvenating quality of care.

A wider workshop and review meeting is anticipated at a later stage, allowing to engage additional actors and partners. Timed at the early stages of this work, the event will take a relaxed atmosphere, with its programme designed to generate discussion and opportunities to share experiences and ideas. This meeting is seen as a key step towards the further review and development of concepts and tools.

Objectives

This event sets out to present and discuss preliminary work in the development of a renewed quality of care framework for the WHO European Region, with the following objectives:

1. To gather technical input from countries and experts to review and renew the direction of quality of care work based on an understanding of needs for the WHO European Region; and
2. To renew quality of care concepts, update mechanisms and advance an accountability framework for quality of care in the context of developing a revised report and tool for country applications in the Region.

Approach and guiding questions

Taking a health systems approach, the meeting will explore quality of care by differentiating three tiers based on their scope, mechanisms and possible accountability arrangements:

1. **Quality assurance (macro – systems).** What are the core mechanisms to consider for assuring quality of inputs such as human resources, pharmaceuticals, technologies, clinical processes, facilities? Who is accountable for these mechanisms?
2. **Quality management (meso – organizations and facilities).** What are the core mechanisms to consider for managing towards quality such as total quality management, or results-based management? Who is accountable for these mechanisms?
3. **Quality improvement (micro – clinical practice).** What are the core mechanisms to consider for quality improvement in clinical practices, such as clinical audits, peer review groups and continuous medical education? Who is accountable for these mechanisms?

Expected results

The expected results of this first technical workshop and country coordination meeting include:

- Overview of the current context of quality of care in selected countries, drawing initial observations on key themes and similarities for further reflection and review.
- Commented analytical framework and agreement on areas for further review.
- Agreement on way forward for applying the revised tools in countries.

Participants

Participants include an estimated 30 representatives from the following different profiles:

Member States	Experts (temporary advisors)	WHO staff
• Ministry of Health officials • Representatives from relevant institutions (e.g. Health insurance funds, accreditation agencies, national institutes for EBM)	• Topic specific experts with a focus on experiences in countries • Invited representatives from key partner organizations	• WHO Country Offices • WHO Regional Office • WHO Headquarters