

Building Resilient Health Systems: Jhpiego's Blueprint for Strengthening Primary Health Care



Half of the world's population lacks access to essential health services, with more than a billion people at risk of falling into poverty due to out-of-pocket health costs that account for 10% or more of their household budget.¹ Primary health care (PHC) is a whole-of-society approach to effectively organize and strengthen national health systems to bring services for health and well-being closer to communities. Jhpiego understands that while the global vision of PHC shares common aims and objectives, its success is rooted in country contexts, the realities of existing health systems, and the skills and composition of the local health workforce, including community health workers. PHC is much more than the sum of vertical programs delivered at first point of contact. To be successful, PHC must prioritize what people and communities want and need, strengthen local systems, and measurably improve health for citizens while being flexible to adapt to different contexts to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Jhpiego is a nonprofit global leader in the creation and delivery of transformative health care solutions that save lives. For half a century, Jhpiego has partnered with governments at national and subnational levels, health experts, and communities to support the strengthening of health workers' skills and the development of health systems that protect lives now and guarantee healthier futures for women and their families. Jhpiego builds on its rich history and deep knowledge of local realities and health opportunities to understand what effective PHC systems look like, and to co-create the strategies required to achieve countries' visions of PHC. The vast majority of Jhpiego's work across countries—from reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health service strengthening, to HIV, TB, malaria and noncommunicable disease programming—are delivered through a contextualized and localized PHC approach. As PHC serves as the first line of defense against emerging infectious diseases, it is also critical for pandemic preparedness and response in Jhpiego's global health security efforts.

As countries strive to provide access to essential services for all, many grapple with identifying and implementing local solutions to challenges that threaten essential primary healthcare system elements, including insecurity, conflict, and disease outbreaks; underdeveloped financing models; inappropriate monitoring and evaluation structures; insufficient health workforce development; and inadequate attention to the community's needs (including around gender equity).

Why Primary Health Care?

PHC provides

90% of health services needed across a person's lifespan.

PHC approach can deliver

91% of essential universal health coverage interventions.

If implemented effectively,

75% of projected health gains from the Sustainable Development Goals can be realized through PHC, saving over 60 million lives and increasing average global life expectancy by 3.7 years by 2030.

Health facilities like mine are often the first point of contact between the community and the health system. We help people when they are suffering from illness, no matter what. Helping them feel safe and encouraging them to come to the facility no matter what type of symptom.

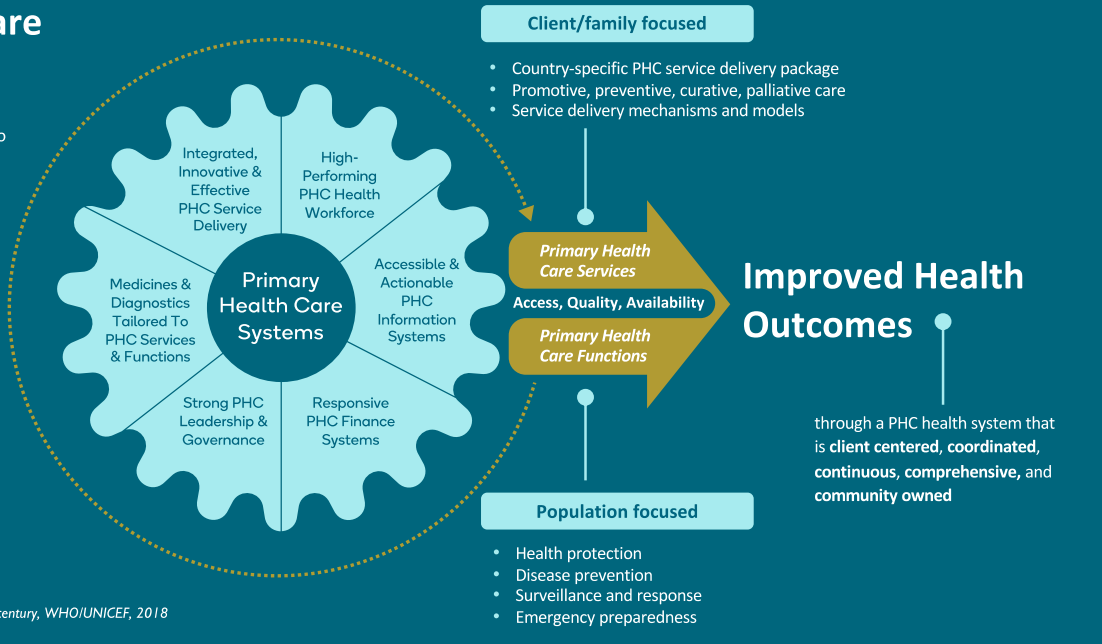
Roger Zingue,
Nurse in Charge, Burkina Faso

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/primary-health-care>

Primary Health Care Is an Approach

PHC is a whole-of-society approach to health that

- Aims to equitably maximize the level and distribution of health and well-being
- By focusing on people's needs and preferences (as both individuals and communities)
- As early as possible along the continuum from health promotion and disease prevention to treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care and
- As close as feasible to people's everyday environment



Drawing on its strong country networks, extensive experience, and core competencies in systems strengthening and health service innovation across technical areas and geographies, Jhpiego works closely with national and subnational governments to identify needs and opportunities across these health system elements, and select and bundle catalytic interventions into robust health care programs. Through these tailored programs, countries enhance critical PHC system elements, prioritizing individual and population impact, optimizing resource efficiency, achieving measurable results, and building resilient and sustainable health systems.

Use **design and systems thinking** methodologies to collaborate with stakeholders, communities, health care providers, and health service users to understand and define what is needed and wanted, and jointly reimagine, test, and implement services to deliver on that vision.

Support countries to enhance the availability and **use of quality PHC data** and employ data-driven insights to inform decision-making, enhance service delivery, and continuously improve the effectiveness of implemented interventions and services.

Identify cutting-edge **technology solutions**—both client- and provider-facing—to expand PHC to the household, strengthen continuity of care across tiers of service, increase access to and availability of services, enhance self-care, and foster innovation in health information collection and use.

Integrate proven **gender-transformative solutions** and tools to support the PHC workforce to overcome gender-based barriers to entry, growth, and leadership in the workplace, and clients and communities to address harmful gender norms that inhibit access to PHC information and services, influence health-seeking behaviors and practices, and impact health outcomes.

Bring together local communities and structures to engage with formal health systems to strengthen **community participation** and feedback, identify and solve local problems, and advocate for their needs and rights, enabling communities to achieve a higher level of health and wellness.

Tap into the dynamic spirit of innovation, swift adaptation, and diversity of the **private sector**, including social entrepreneurs, to develop market-based solutions for PHC, improving access to quality health services and products and drawing learnings from locally relevant private sector approaches.

As it has for the past 50 years, Jhpiego works with country partners to increase access, quality, and availability of PHC service packages and service delivery mechanisms, as well as core functions such as health protection, disease prevention, surveillance and response, and emergency preparedness, to deliver on its goal of improving health outcomes through a strong PHC health system that is client centered, coordinated, continuous, comprehensive, and community owned.