



STATEMENT ON UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

GLOBAL ACTION ON MEN'S HEALTH

12 December 2022

Global Action on Men's Health (GAMH) is delighted to support Universal Health Coverage Day on 12 December 2022. We want to see a world in which everyone everywhere can access a full range of quality health services – from prevention to palliative care – without financial hardship. Universal health coverage (UHC) lifts people out of poverty, promotes the wellbeing of families and communities, protects against public health crises, and moves us toward the goal of Health For All.

The achievement of UHC requires much more attention to be paid to gender. A World Health Organisation report on UHC stated:

Countries should prepare inclusive and gender-responsive national health strategies that consider wider dimensions of inequality, such as wealth, ethnicity, education, geographic location and sociocultural factors and implement them within a human rights framework. Countries must consider the inequities and disparities within and across groups and geographic areas in accessing health care, learn how gender norms and unequal power relations impede access and identify the key barriers to access for women, men, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex populations.*

We completely agree.

Male life expectancy globally is currently 71 years compared to 76 years for females. Men have a 21% probability of dying between the ages of 30 and 70 from cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease. For women, the probability is 14%. The male suicide rate is over twice the female rate.

For men and boys specifically, wide-ranging action is required, including:

- Global health organisations and national governments must address the health and wellbeing needs of men and boys in all relevant policies and programmes. Overarching national men's

* World Health Organization. Primary Health Care on the Road to Universal Health Coverage: 2019 Monitoring Report. Conference Edition. WHO, Geneva (Switzerland); 2019

health policies, or gender and health policies that include men and boys, also have an important role.

- Men and boys should be encouraged and supported to take better care of their own health as well as the health of their partners and children.
- Health practitioners need to take greater account of the specific needs of men and boys in service delivery, health promotion and clinical practice. It is essential that the full range of primary care services are made as accessible and welcoming as possible to men and boys.
- Other agencies and organisations, such as schools and workplaces, should be helped to be more aware of their potentially significant impact on the health of men and boys. Sport and digital technologies can also influence men's attitudes and behaviours and be settings for the delivery of health services.
- Sustained multi-disciplinary research is needed into the health of men and boys.
- There must be approaches to health that fully recognise the needs of both sexes in policy, practice and funding and which promote greater gender equality.

Peter Baker, GAMH's Director, said: 'Global Action on Men's Health fully supports Universal Health Coverage Day 2022 and calls on international health organisations and national governments to commit to developing health services that are accessible and welcoming to everyone, whatever their gender. Too many men and boys are currently missing out on essential prevention, diagnoses, treatment and care because health and related services overlook their specific needs. This is contributing directly to unnecessarily early deaths from a wide range of physical and mental health problems.'

