

## M8 Alliance Declaration

On May 8th and 9th, international health leaders gathered in Montreal for the World Health Summit's (WHS) North American regional meeting. More than 700 researchers, physicians, allied health professionals, industry representatives, policy-makers, government officials, students, and civil society and community stakeholders from around the world were on-hand to discuss ways to improve population's health and healthcare services.

The theme for this WHS interdisciplinary meeting — the first to be held in North America — was *Health and Healthcare Delivery in Pluralistic Societies*.

The current political, economic and social climate, which has been punctuated with several conflicts and crises, underscores the urgent and ongoing need to face existing and arising health challenges and to provide healthcare to the most vulnerable populations.

An inhospitable and inhumane welcome has become a reality for far too many migrants and this has had important consequences on health and the healthcare offered to them.

Cosmopolitan countries that are open to immigration, like Canada, certain with universal health coverage, must prepare to face new and increasing challenges in healthcare. It is with this in mind that the WHS regional summit is proposing potential solutions.

It is important for health experts and stakeholders, like those that were gathered in Montreal, to be socially accountable and to reflect upon the impact these events and world trends have on health and healthcare services in societies that cultivate openness to diversity.

On a more practical level, it is also important to bridge the gap between health-related public policies, fundamental science, and clinical research in order to offer the best possible healthcare to populations characterized by diversity. Integrating patients and citizens in the decision-making process through partnerships and coconstruction of action strategies is a critical component for success.

It is evermore essential to engage in a profound reflection on the health problems afflicting Aboriginal and Indigenous populations in order to prioritize with them actions and ensure a better future for these peoples, who have long been neglected and misunderstood. Here too, integrating indigenous ways of knowing and of governing health issues is a requirement for successful action.

Within this context, members of the M8 Alliance and participants of the WHS North American regional meeting identified priority actions for each of four main themes:

### **New Frontiers in Medical Treatments**

We are living in a globalized world that is increasingly generating more diverse societies. This new reality must be taken into account by focusing on inclusive approaches that:

- Ensure new state-of-the-art treatments and diagnostics are accessible to populations within developed countries, countries in transition, developing countries alike;
- Introduce new technologies, including precision medicine, human genome engineering, and stem cell applications, while addressing ethical issues;
- Adapt innovative medical treatments to aging populations and to the increased number of patients living with neurodegenerative diseases;
- Prepare the healthcare system to better address viral infections and antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

## **Health and Healthcare Benefits for Different Populations**

In pluralistic societies, it is essential to accept and promote leadership, as well as to engage communities involved in establishing priorities and means for healthcare and social services delivery. In this regard, we recommend:

- Offering high-quality, safe healthcare in a timely manner to entire populations;
- Respecting Aboriginal autonomy, culture, and knowledge, especially in matters of health governance;
- Welcoming and treating migrants and people affected by crises and climate change with special attention directed toward to women and children;
- Offering safe and healthy environments for workers especially those who work in extreme conditions.

## **Environmental, Social, and Cultural Determinants of Healthcare**

The health of individuals and populations are determined by the environment in which they work, study, socialize, recreate and receive treatment. Taking these health determinants into account in order to protect and promote health and equity incontrovertibly requires:

- Developing a scientific knowledge base that allows for an understanding of how living environments create favourable conditions for promoting health and preventing disease;
- Adopting evidence-based approaches to equitably transform environments by involving health professionals, stakeholders working outside the health sector, industry representatives, community groups, and civil society;
- Evaluating the impact of interventions implemented and widely sharing evaluation findings in order to continuously improve systems and actions that shape life settings.

## **Medical Training for Optimal Healthcare**

Training curricula for physicians and other healthcare professionals as well as their extra curricular activities, should prepare them to fully assume their role as citizens and actors of change in order to promote a more stable, fair and just world. To achieve this end, we must:

- Adapt training for healthcare professionals to the realities of globalization with its risks and opportunities all the while maintaining the technical and caring expertise required for the adoption of these practices.