

**Strengthening the Health System Response to COVID-19
in the WHO transmission scenarios
Action points for the WHO European Region (1 April 2020)**

Transmission scenarios	No cases	Sporadic cases	Clusters of cases	Community transmission
Health system response				
1. Expand capacity for communication and proactively manage media relations	Boost the communication team at Ministries of Health, Public Health Agencies, and local governments in charge of coordinating the response.			
	In addition to risk communication , develop clear messages related to symptom recognition, first contact, appropriate use of health services, continuity of essential services, financial access and social protection measures related to COVID-19 (in addition to risk communication)	<p>Hold daily media briefings</p> <p>Launch dedicated website</p> <p>Deploy social media strategy</p> <p>Establish joint task force of influencers and journalists</p>	<p>Hold twice-daily media briefings</p> <p>Update dedicated website</p> <p>Keep up social media strategy</p> <p>Keep up joint task force of influencers and journalists</p>	<p>Hold twice-daily media briefings</p> <p>Update dedicated website</p> <p>Keep up social media strategy</p> <p>Keep up joint task force of influencers and journalists</p>
2. Bolster capacity of essential public health services to enable the emergency response	Activate the emergency response plans and mechanisms	Enhance the emergency response plans	Scale up the emergency response plans	Scale up of emergency response plans
	Review capacities and prepare a phased plan for scaling up capacity of public health services	Enhance surge capacity of public health services	Scale up surge capacity of public health services	Scale up surge capacity of public health services
	<p>Establish capacity for COVID-19 surveillance</p> <p>Establish capacity to provide evidence-informed advice on COVID-19 policy development</p>	<p>Implement COVID-19 surveillance</p> <p>Enhance the capacity to monitor the effect of the policy implementation and provision of further evidence-based policy advice</p>	<p>Expand COVID-19 surveillance capacity</p> <p>Scale up the capacity to monitor the effect of the policy implementation and provision of further evidence-based policy advice</p>	<p>Adapt existing COVID-19 surveillance systems (e.g. sentinel surveillance).</p> <p>Scale up the capacity to monitor the effect of the policy implementation and provision of further evidence-based policy advice</p>

3. Clarify first point of contact strategy for suspected COVID cases: phone, online, physical.	Develop a first contact strategy with call center, online platform, and/or physical approach.	Clearly communicate first contact strategy.	Clearly communicate first contact strategy.	Step up significantly communication about first contact strategy.
	Develop capacity expansion plan for three stages of the outbreak.	Increase capacity	Increase capacity	Increase capacity Activate online platform with chatbots to ease burden on triage personnel in call centers and physical locations
	Develop national triage algorithms with pathways based on WHO-recommended case management and distribute them.	Train incoming triage personnel.	Train incoming triage personnel.	Train incoming triage personnel.
4. Protect other potential first contact health system entry points assuming not all people will follow advice	Put in place standard operating procedures that include measures for assessing and isolating individuals, infection prevention and control , protecting staff and initiating notification systems for all health facilities potentially used for first contact.	Activate standard operating procedures.	Practice standard operating procedures.	Practice standard operating procedures.
	Develop national triage algorithms with pathways based on WHO recommended case management , distribute them, and train personnel.	Apply protocol.	Apply protocol.	Apply protocol.

<p>5. Designate hospitals to receive COVID-19 patients and prepare to mobilize surge acute and ICU capacity</p>	<p>Assess, estimate and continuously review needed hospital capacity to treat COVID-19 patients with severe or critical presentations also including options in the private sector.</p> <p>Use surge calculator to predict needed hospital and ICU capacity including HRH and oxygen therapy for coming 3 months.</p>	<p>Designate hospitals to receive COVID-19 patients based on the surge plan and assess their capacity and readiness.</p>	<p>Activate designated hospitals.</p>	<p>Expand designated hospitals by surge plan in both public and private sectors.</p> <p>Expand COVID-19 space in designated hospitals by repurposing ORs and recovery rooms.</p> <p>Expand beyond designated hospitals into alternative designated public and private facilities if needed e.g. fever tents, hotels.</p>
<p>6. Organize and expand services close to home for COVID-19 response.</p>	<p>Develop case management protocol for home care for mild cases (with a surge scenario using phone and online capabilities) and train PHC and/or community health workers.</p>	<p>Test case management protocol for home-based care with home isolated cases.</p>	<p>Apply home care protocol and test surge scenarios.</p>	<p>Apply surge scenario and scale-up home care services expanding phone and online capabilities.</p>
<p>7. Maintain continuity of essential services while freeing up capacity for COVID-19 response.</p>	<p>Identify essential medicines, services, and equipment whose continuity must be maintained (e.g. antenatal care, births, management of chronic diseases, renal dialysis, urgent response, critical care services etc.).</p> <p>Protect populations seeking care with other health conditions from COVID-19 in health facilities through reinforcing standard operating procedures for facility based infection control, including separation of pathways and dedicated hospital equipment</p>	<p>Identify services, including elective treatment, that can be postponed or delivered through alternative mechanisms.</p> <p>Activate standard operating procedures</p>	<p>Begin to postpone non-urgent hospitalizations, reduce frequency of visits for chronic patients, apply tele-medicine solutions,</p> <p>Practice standard operating procedures</p>	<p>Fully activate business continuity plans at all levels of service delivery by dropping all non-essential services.</p> <p>Implement active discharge management for elderly and social care patients in synergy with community and home care providers.</p> <p>Reduce the number of persons that have access to hospitals, namely patients, students, medical representatives, patient visitors', etc.</p>

<p>8. Train, repurpose and mobilize the health workforce according to priority services.</p>	<p>Review or develop plans to increase surge capacity in preparation for community transmission reinforced by designated mobile communication channels and measures to reprofile and upskill the workforce, with appropriate training and supervisory support, and aligned with scopes of practice, as necessary.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free up health workers from regular patient load; • mobilize reserve capacity; • mobilize staff from other specialisations with basic training in infection control and physical care skills; • rely on pharmacists purposefully on the provision of front-line advice to the public and to resolve supply chain difficulties; • encourage retired staff to return to the work in a low risk environment releasing serving staff with lower risk status to support COVID-19 responses; • Move employed staff at risk of elevated mortality to lower risk care settings. • consider final year students for employment and call on volunteers. 	
<p>9. Protect the physical health of frontline health workers</p>	<p>Estimate PPE needs including for surge period and ensure availability of PPE stock.</p>	<p>Ensure access to PPE for all health workers dealing with COVID-19 patients with a review how to use it, under what circumstances this needs to be used, how it will be made available.</p>	<p>Ensure access to PPE for all health workers dealing with COVID-19 patients with a review how to use it, under what circumstances this needs to be used.</p>	<p>Ensure access to PPE for all health workers dealing with COVID-19 patients with a review how to use it, under what circumstances this needs to be used, and how to report shortages.</p>
<p>10. Anticipate and address mental health needs of the health workforce</p>	<p>Establish a call hotline for health workers for psychological support.</p> <p>Develop training in psychological support to health workers including psychological first aid to alleviate emotional burnout and distress using online platform to reach wide range of audiences with a planned rolled out relative to role and involvement.</p>	<p>Activate hotline and refine its approach.</p> <p>Implement training (online) in psychological support for designated hospitals.</p>	<p>Activate hotline and refine its approach.</p> <p>Implement training (online) in psychological support for wider range of health facilities taking part in COVID-19 response including PHC facilities.</p>	<p>Activate and scale capacity if needed.</p> <p>Implement training (online) for wider range of involved communities, teachers, members of the police force, fire personnel, store keepers and volunteers.</p>

11. Review supply chain and stocks for essential medicines and health technologies	<p>Adopt good pharmaceutical procurement practices including restriction of purchase to the essential medicines list, determination of order quantities based on reliable needs estimation, competitive tendering from qualified suppliers, separation of key functions and monitoring of suppliers. Ensure emergency mechanisms are in place for procurement and registration of medicines and health technologies. Consider increasing buffer stock for essential medicines and health technologies.</p>	<p>Engage in regular stock management and define emergency stocks at all level (region and central)</p>	<p>Engage in regular stock management and define emergency stocks at all level (region and central)</p>	<p>Engage in regular stock management and define emergency stocks at all level (region and central)</p>
	<p>Ensure availability of all essential medicines and health technologies (including specific products for the COVID 19 emergency situation) with procurement following quality minimum standards and WHO technical specifications.</p>	<p>Engage in regular stock management and define emergency stocks at all level (region and central)</p>	<p>Engage in regular stock management and define emergency stocks at all level (region and central)</p>	<p>Engage in regular stock management and define emergency stocks at all level (region and central)</p>
	<p>Regulate and promote local pharmacy based production of WHO-recommended hand sanitizers and disinfectants.</p>	<p>Ensure supply is available and monitor Good Manufacturing Practices</p>	<p>Ensure supply is available and monitor Good Manufacturing Practices</p>	<p>Ensure supply is available and monitor Good Manufacturing Practices</p>
12. Mobilize financial support and ease logistical operational barriers.	<p>Introduce emergency legislation.</p> <p>Mobilize emergency reserve funds to pay for increased costs.</p> <p>Relax selected procurement and hiring rules related to the emergency response.</p> <p>Clarify any barriers to redeployment or short-term contracting of health workers for the purposes of surge capacity</p>			

<p>13. Assess and mitigate potential financial barriers to accessing care</p>	<p>Review benefit packages and copayment policies to ensure that COVID-19 related health services are free of charge including PHC, emergency response, transport, emergency admission and intensive care). Wave any potential fees associated with COVID-19.</p>	<p>Communicate clearly about benefit entitlements and free access to ensure timely care seeking and notification to aid containment efforts and timely treatment.</p>	<p>Communicate clearly about benefit entitlements and free access to ensure timely care seeking and notification to aid containment efforts and timely treatment.</p>	<p>Communicate clearly about benefit entitlements and free access to ensure timely care seeking and notification to aid containment efforts and timely treatment.</p>
<p>14. Assess and mitigate potential physical access barriers for vulnerable groups of people</p>	<p>Assess access and potential barriers (especially to first contact and transport) for vulnerable population groups.</p> <p>Establish list of vulnerable groups to monitor.</p> <p>Develop intervention strategy to strengthen prevention and support access among vulnerable groups in case of need.</p>	<p>Establish explicit monitoring efforts for access of vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>Continue monitoring efforts for access of vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>Continue monitoring efforts for access of vulnerable groups and activate intervention strategies in case of need.</p>
<p>15. Optimize social protection to mitigate the impact of public health measures on household financial security</p>	<p>Optimize social protection arrangements to mitigate the impact of public health measures on household incomes including sick-leave rules and benefits, compensation in case of taking care of children due to school closures (if cannot telework), and of elderly due to closure of nursing homes.</p>	<p>Implement new benefits</p>	<p>Implement new benefits</p>	<p>Implement new benefits</p>

16.Ensure clarity in roles, relationships, and coordination mechanisms in health system governance and across the government	<p>Clarify roles and relationships, and coordination mechanisms. Communicate them clearly to all including the general population to ensure transparency of decision-making in the emerging response process.</p>	<p>Continue to clarify roles and responsibilities as required</p> <p>Promote transparency in decision-making process</p>	<p>Continue to clarify roles and responsibilities as required</p> <p>Promote transparency in decision-making process</p>	<p>Continue to clarify roles and responsibilities as required</p> <p>Promote transparency in decision-making process</p>
	<p>Operationalize coordination mechanisms between the governance structure of the emergency management team and the governance structure in health services delivery bridging public-private providers and health and social care.</p> <p>Designate focal point for essential services.</p>	<p>Continue coordination mechanisms between the governance structure of the emergency management team and the governance structure in health services delivery to ensure a continuous adaptation of the emergency response based on the developing scenario</p>	<p>Continue coordination mechanisms between the governance structure of the emergency management team and the governance structure in health services delivery to ensure a continuous adaptation of the emergency response based on the developing scenario</p>	<p>Continue coordination mechanisms between the governance structure of the emergency management team and the governance structure in health services delivery to ensure a continuous adaptation of the emergency response based on the developing scenario</p>
	<p>Activate inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms to implement above measures and mitigate the impact of the outbreak on households and the economy.</p>	<p>Continue inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms to implement above measures and continue to mitigate the impact of the outbreak on households and the economy.</p>	<p>Continue inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms to implement above measures and continue to mitigate the impact of the outbreak on households and the economy.</p>	<p>Continue inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms to implement above measures and continue to mitigate the impact of the outbreak on households and the economy.</p>