



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



49th DIRECTING COUNCIL

61st SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

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RESOLUTION

CD49.R17

STRATEGY AND PLAN OF ACTION ON MENTAL HEALTH

THE 49th DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Having studied the report of the Director *Strategy and Plan of Action on Mental Health* (Document CD49/11);

Recognizing the burden from mental and substance abuse disorders—morbidity, mortality, and disability—in the world and in the Region of the Americas in particular, as well as the existing gap in the number of sick people who do not receive any type of treatment;

Understanding that there is no physical health without mental health and that an approach to the health-disease process is necessary not only from the perspective of care for impairments, but also from the angle of protecting positive health attributes and promoting the wellbeing of the population, and, in addition, that from the public health perspective, there are psychosocial and human behavior factors that perform a crucial function;

Considering the context and framework for action offered by the Health Agenda for the Americas, the PAHO Strategic Plan 2008-2012, and the WHO Mental Health Gap Action Program: Scaling up care for mental, neurological, and substance abuse disorders (mhGAP), which reflect the importance of the issue and define strategic objectives for addressing mental health;

Observing that the Strategy and Plan of Action on Mental Health addresses the principal work areas and defines areas for technical cooperation to serve the different mental health needs of the countries,

RESOLVES:

1. To endorse the provisions of the Strategy and Plan of Action on Mental Health and its implementation within the framework of the special conditions of each country, in order to respond appropriately to current and future mental health needs.
2. To urge Member States to:
 - (a) include mental health as a priority within national health policies, through the implementation of mental health plans that are consonant with the different problems and priorities of the countries, in order to maintain the achievements made and advance toward new goals, especially with regard to reducing existing treatment gaps;
 - (b) promote universal, equitable access to mental health care for the entire population, through strengthening mental health services within the framework of primary health care-based systems and integrated delivery networks and continuing activities to eliminate the old psychiatric hospital-centered model;
 - (c) continue working to strengthen the legal frameworks of the countries with a view to protecting the human rights of people with mental disorders and to achieve the effective application of the laws;
 - (d) promote intersectoral initiatives to promote mental health, with particular attention to children and adolescents and on coping with the stigma and discrimination directed at people with mental disorders;
 - (e) support the effective involvement of the community and of user and family-member associations in activities designed to promote and protect the mental health of the population;
 - (f) regard mental health human resources development as a key component in the improvement of plans and services, through the development and implementation of systematic training programs;
 - (g) bridge the existing mental health information gap through improvements in the production, analysis, and use of information, as well as through research, with an intercultural and gender approach;

- (h) strengthen partnerships between the public sector and other sectors, as well as with nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and key social actors, emphasizing their involvement in the development of mental health plans.
3. To request the Director to:
- (a) support the Member States in the preparation and implementation of national mental health plans within the framework of their health policies, taking into account the Strategy and Plan of Action, endeavoring to correct inequities, and giving priority to care for vulnerable and special-needs groups, including indigenous peoples;
 - (b) collaborate in the assessment of mental health services in the countries to ensure that appropriate corrective measures grounded on scientific evidence are taken;
 - (c) facilitate the dissemination of information and the sharing of positive, innovative experiences, as well as the available resources in the Region, and promote technical cooperation among the Member States;
 - (d) promote partnerships with governmental and nongovernmental organizations, as well as with international organizations and other regional actors in support of the multisectoral response that is required in the process of implementing this Strategy and Plan of Action.

(Ninth plenary, 2 October 2009)