

# Human Resources for Health

## ABSTRACT

A health system is an expensive knowledge-based industry made up of professionals, paraprofessionals, and administrative and support personnel. Human resources to provide and manage public health and clinical services are crucial to developing and sustaining national and global health systems. High-income countries are replete with highly trained and motivated personnel, but face issues such as increasing costs of care for aging populations and using new categories of health workers. Low-income countries face severe human resource shortages as training programs are underdeveloped. Health workforce issues include urban–rural differentiation, promoting standards and quality of care, specialization versus primary care, tensions between public and private health systems, and integrating new health professions. Migration of health professionals from low-income to high-income countries hampers the buildup of a critical mass of leaders, providers, and teachers to expand the capacity of health systems. Strategic policies are crucial to this field.

## SUPPORT MATERIAL

### Student Competencies: Transferable Knowledge and Skills

The following are points of emphasis highlighting key principles that public health graduates are expected to understand and apply into practice. The key points arise from this chapter and other studies in specialized courses, seminars, readings during public health education, and continuing education. The selected skills and knowledge are divided into two parts. The first consists of core questions pertaining to immediate student requirements, while the second refers to competencies essential for successful public health practitioners. These include competencies recommended by the American Public Health Association in 2007, as well as those of the European Association of Schools of Public Health and the Public Health Agency of Canada's 2008 Report on Core Competencies. For more detailed competencies please consult the Association of Schools of Public Health website at: <http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=851>

### Part I: Core Questions

1. What impact do the supply of medical and other health personnel and human resources training policies have on the economics and quality of health care?
2. Discuss how the excess supply of one health profession may limit the development of alternative ways of providing care.

3. Describe potential roles of midlevel health workers in community or institutional settings.
4. Why should medical education take place in a multi-faculty university setting or in a specialized institute?
5. What is the place of continuing education for various health professions and how should it be carried out?
6. Should external accreditation of health training programs be through government regulation or professional voluntary organizations, or both?
7. Discuss why public health training is multidisciplinary.
8. Why and how should public health and clinical training be linked?

### Part II: Knowledge and Skills

1. Understand the concepts of supply and demand and regulation in human resources planning in the health sector.
2. Be familiar with the roles and educational background of allied health professionals, including doctors, nurses, social workers, and occupational therapists.
3. Recognize newly emerging health professions and their impact on the national health infrastructure (e.g., nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, community health worker).
4. Recognize leadership style and personality type and apply these constructively towards positive human resource management.

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