



## **WFSA DECLARATION ON PATIENTS' RIGHTS TO ESSENTIAL EMERGENCY AND CRITICAL CARE**

Each year, more than 45 million people become critically ill globally, and mortality rates are high - 18-28%. Many of these lives can be saved through simple, low-cost interventions—Essential Emergency and Critical Care.

The World Health Organization emphasizes the need for safe, effective, and equitable care for all patients, and has recently called for improvements in Emergency, Critical and Operative (ECO) care and expanded access to oxygen. Essential emergency and critical care is the foundational level of care that underpins the ECO continuum and includes the basic clinical actions and resources required by any critically ill patient.

It is unacceptable that critically ill patients continue to die or suffer avoidable complications due to the absence of feasible and affordable essential care. Preventable deaths from delayed recognition of critical illness, or missed basic interventions such as airway management, oxygen therapy, and fluid administration, should no longer be tolerated.

Gaps in facility readiness and delays in delivering this core package of care reflect major quality and safety failures within health systems. Addressing these shortcomings is essential if we are to uphold patients' rights to timely and effective care, irrespective of geography or economic circumstance.

WFSA recognizes the pivotal role of anaesthesiologists in championing and providing quality care for critically ill patients across operating theatres and intensive care units, and in general wards and other units in health facilities.

WFSA affirms that all critically ill patients have the right to receive essential emergency and critical care. This fundamental package of care must be prioritised within health systems to ensure that no patient is denied life-saving treatment due to lack of resources, training, organization, or leadership commitment.

WFSA calls on governments, health systems, and professional bodies to ensure the universal implementation of essential emergency and critical care, so that no patient is denied their right to life-saving treatment.