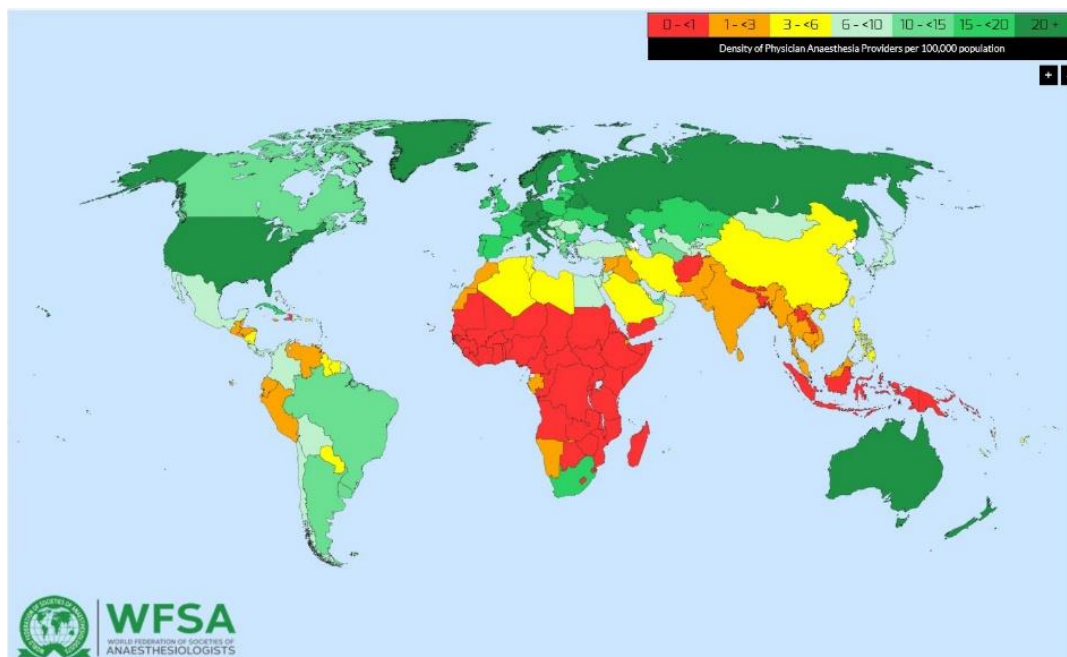




## WFSA and The G4 Alliance's response to the Political Declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

The World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA) and The Global Alliance for Surgical, Obstetric, Trauma and Anaesthesia care (The G4 Alliance) note the declaration of the Third High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and welcome this public commitment and reaffirmation of efforts to combat NCDs.

The WFSA and The G4 Alliance strongly welcome the recognition, in **point 35**, of the need for adequate and well-trained and equipped health workforce.<sup>1</sup> The WFSA has been a leader collecting data and raising awareness of the issue of workforce, so crucial to the safety and quality of anaesthesia provision, and one of the three [Guiding Pillars](#) of the WFSA's advocacy work. The publication in 2017 of '[The WFSA Global Anaesthesia Workforce Survey](#)'<sup>2</sup> demonstrated that 70 countries had a total anaesthesia provider density of less than 5 per 100,000 population and many of these had less than one provider per 100,000. The WFSA recommends a minimum physician anaesthesia provider density of 5 per 100,000. Without adequate numbers of trained staff, it will be impossible to scale-up anaesthesia provision worldwide, and impossible to ensure access to safe anaesthesia for all patients. Similarly, the WFSA has advocated for appropriate equipment and medicines as recommended by the [WHO-WFSA International Standards for a Safe Practice of Anesthesia](#) published in May 2018.



*Global Workforce map showing the distribution of the physician anaesthesia workforce*

<sup>1</sup> 'Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases' Available at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A%2F73%2FL.2&Submit=Search&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A%2F73%2FL.2&Submit=Search&Lang=E). (Accessed 12/10/2018), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Anaesthesia and Analgesia, 'The WFSA Global Anaesthesia Workforce Survey'. September 2017 - Volume 125 - Issue 3. Available at [https://journals.lww.com/anaesthesia-analgesia/Fulltext/2017/09000/The\\_WFSA\\_Global\\_Anesthesia\\_Workforce\\_Survey.39.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/anaesthesia-analgesia/Fulltext/2017/09000/The_WFSA_Global_Anesthesia_Workforce_Survey.39.aspx) (accessed 12/10/2018), p 981–990.

Although the WFSA and The G4 Alliance recognise that diseases such as HIV/AIDs and Tuberculosis remain very serious global health problems, as noted in **point 39 which discusses integrated responses to NCDs and communicable diseases**, we are concerned over the lack of reference to surgical care needed to treat NCDs. Virtually all NCDs will require a surgical intervention over the life-course, including 60% of cases of cancer. Health systems must be able to provide safe, affordable anaesthesia and surgery in order to achieve UHC. The provision of anaesthesia and surgical care has long been neglected and it is estimated that, each year, 17 million people die from surgically treatable conditions. This is equal to the number of premature deaths (under the age of 70) from all NCDs,<sup>3</sup> and is more than four times the number of people who die from HIV, tuberculosis and malaria combined.

As a significant number of NCDs are not preventable, the WFSA and The G4 Alliance are concerned that the Declaration places such singular emphasis on prevention, overlooking the need for detection, diagnosis, treatment and management, which may in turn require anaesthesia and surgery. Detection, diagnosis, treatment and management (including pain management) represent a critical strategy for successfully addressing NCDs. Although we recognise that the declaration commits to strengthening health systems in **point 35**, we would have liked to see this emphasis on detection, diagnosis, treatment and management alongside prevention of NCDs appearing explicitly throughout the document, as has been done for prevention and control.

Similarly, **point 35 notes the importance of ‘access to safe, affordable, effective and quality essential diagnostics, medicines, vaccines and technologies, and palliative care’.**<sup>4</sup> 33 million people face catastrophic health expenditure due to payment for surgery and anaesthesia care each year alone, which is a further barrier to access and therefore an urgent human rights concern. The WFSA and The G4 Alliance would have liked to have seen this urgency reflected in the declaration to evidence Member States’ tangible commitment to UHC.

We welcome this Political Declaration and the recognition that NCDs require urgent action, and will work with interlocutors to raise the profile of the need for safe surgical care and anaesthesia and for strengthened health systems being integral to the global NCDs response.



**WFSA**  
WORLD FEDERATION OF SOCIETIES OF  
ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS



**alliance**

surgical, obstetric, trauma  
& anaesthesia care

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<sup>3</sup> NCD Countdown 2030 collaborators. 'NCD Countdown 2030: worldwide trends in non-communicable disease mortality and progress towards Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4'. The Lancet, Volume 392, Issue 10152.

<sup>4</sup> 'Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases' Available at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A%2F73%2FL.2&Submit=Search&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A%2F73%2FL.2&Submit=Search&Lang=E). (Accessed 19/10/2018), p. 5.