

Joint Statement from WHA79 Side Event: Immunizing across the life-course: Supporting healthy ageing, NCD management, and system resilience

This statement is co-ordinated by:

- International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA)
- Global Allergy & Airways Patient Platform (GAAPP)
- International Federation on Ageing (IFA)

Statement on Life-Course Immunization and Healthy Ageing:

Issued from the WHA79 Side Event 'Immunization across the life-course: Supporting healthy ageing, NCD management, and system resilience' co-hosted by IFPMA, GAAPP, and IFA.

As populations age and chronic disease burdens grow, prioritizing a life-course approach to immunization has never been more integral to healthy ageing and resilient health systems. We encourage governments, international organizations, and civil society to recognize the value of adult immunization as a structural investment in healthy, resilient, and equitable societies and as a driver of economic and fiscal sustainability.

The Scale of the Challenge

Populations are ageing faster than health systems are adapting. By 2030, one in six people globally will be aged 60 or over, while the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and multimorbidity - the coexistence of two or more chronic conditions - continues to rise sharply with age. For people living with chronic conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cardiovascular disease, and diabetes, vaccine-preventable diseases are rarely an isolated event. They can exacerbate underlying conditions, interrupt continuity of care, accelerate functional decline, and contribute to avoidable hospitalization, disability, and mortality.

These impacts extend well beyond individual health outcomes - driving caregiver burden, reduced workforce participation, and increased pressure on health and long-term care systems. Yet many living with chronic conditions still lack the information, access, and reimbursement policies needed to benefit from recommended vaccination guidance.

"People living with COPD are doing everything they can to manage their condition...What they are lacking is information, access, and reimbursement criteria that match the guidelines set for them [on vaccination]."

— Riley Sanders, Head of Government Relations and Public Affairs, GAAPP

Prevention and the Continuum of Care

Despite this burden, prevention and adult immunization remain chronically underfunded, leaving healthcare systems and economies exposed to avoidable costs. By helping people remain healthier for longer, stay in work, and live more independently, adult immunization supports productivity and protects labour force participation, while reducing avoidable disruptions to economic activity. Evidence also shows that adult vaccination programmes can deliver strong returns on investment - up to 19 times the initial investment.

"Prevention-driven systems, supported by pharmaceutical innovation, act as a stabiliser — strengthening economic resilience and helping governments manage demographic and fiscal pressures more sustainably"

— David Reddy, Director-General, IFPMA

These broader economic and societal benefits outline the need to more systematically integrate immunization within health systems and care pathways. Immunization be recognized as a foundational pillar of healthy ageing and health system resilience - not a separate vertical program, but an integrated component of the continuum of care spanning prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and long-term support. When vaccination is embedded

into routine NCD pathways and delivered through community touchpoints (such as pharmacies, community health workers, primary care teams), uptake improves and health outcomes follow.

Inclusive, Integrated, Accountable

Integration alone is insufficient without equity and accountability. Healthy ageing policies must be developed with older persons, themselves. Meaningful engagement of older persons and people living with chronic conditions is essential to ensuring that services are accessible, acceptable, and responsive to lived realities.

Yet accountability frameworks have not kept pace with demographic change. Definitions of premature mortality that end at age 70 rendering older populations invisible within prevention and investment frameworks - despite the growing burden of vaccine-preventable disease, multimorbidity, frailty, and functional decline in later life.

“Every life, at every age, deserves to be counted. When we set a ceiling on whose deaths count as preventable, we set a ceiling on whose health we are willing to invest in.”

— Gregor Sneddon, Secretary-General, International Federation on Ageing

Data systems, targets, and policy indicators must better capture health trajectories and outcomes across the full life-course. Healthy ageing, NCD prevention and management, and immunization policies cannot continue to operate in isolation - they must be systematically integrated to support functional ability, resilience, and quality of life at every age.

A Moment for Action

The evidence is clear, the policy frameworks exist, and demographic change is already reshaping societies and health systems worldwide. The challenge now is implementation and political commitment.

Life-course immunization must be prioritized as a central, strategic component of health policy within healthy ageing, NCD management, primary health care, and long-term care planning. Investing in prevention across the life-course is not only a health imperative - it is a social and economic necessity for longevity-ready societies.

Healthy ageing cannot be achieved without prevention. Prevention, to be effective, must be integrated, equitable, person-centred, and sustained across the life-course.

The co-organizers of this statement invite all organizations that share these principles to support its dissemination and help amplify its reach and impact. If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please contact s.Laghnimi-Hahn@ifpma.org or rbadie@ifa.ngo to learn more about opportunities for engagement.

Co-Organizer Signatories:



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