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WHO guidance calls for urgent transformation of mental health policies

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Identifies five key policy areas requiring urgent reform



The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched new guidance to help all countries reform and strengthen mental health policies and systems. Mental health services worldwide remain underfunded, with major gaps in access and quality.

In some countries, up to 90% of people with severe mental health conditions receive no care at all, while many existing services rely on outdated institutional models that fail to meet international human rights standards.

The guidance provides a clear framework to transform mental health services in line with the latest evidence and international human rights standards, ensuring quality care is accessible to all.

It identifies five key policy areas requiring urgent reform: leadership and governance, service organization, workforce development, person-centred interventions, and addressing social and structural determinants of mental health.

The guidance was developed in consultation with global experts, policymakers and individuals with lived experience. The policy guidance also builds on the resources, guidance and tools developed under the WHO QualityRights initiative, aiming to promote a person-centred, recovery-oriented and rights-based approach to mental health.