

Letter to the Editor

“Accelerate Action Together” the 5 May 2023 World Health Organization SAVE LIVES- Clean Your Hands campaign

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To the Editor—This year marks 75 years of the World Health Organization, and we still strive for health for all. Hand hygiene saves millions of lives every year when performed at the right moments during healthcare delivery. Hand hygiene is also a smart investment that offers exceptional return for each dollar invested. Clean care is a sign of respect to those who seek care, and it protects healthcare and other workers who provide that care.

This is a critical time for countries across the world to accelerate implementation of lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and to increase investments to close gaps in infection prevention and control, including hand hygiene. Indeed, many countries are demonstrating strong engagement and advances in scaling-up those actions, but the progress is slow overall, and gains are at risk.

Together, we can accelerate action on preventing infections and antimicrobial resistance in health care. Strong and engaged communities of health workers and leaders, policy makers and civil society organizations (CSOs) working on safer healthcare systems in many countries can make this happen. Together we can sustain action at the point of care to keep everyone safe and healthy.

For World Hand Hygiene Day 2023, we have focused on CSOs. Driven by their passion, values, and strong social justice agendas, and near the communities they serve, CSOs can spearhead accelerated action at local, national, and international levels.

The WHO is calling on all infection prevention and control practitioners, health and care workers, policy makers and CSOs, alongside those who access care, to join this movement by investing in hand hygiene, leading interventions, and focusing on the Five Moments for Hand Hygiene. Together, let us continue to accelerate progress and achieve effective hand hygiene at the point of care in pursuit of health for all (Fig. 1).

All campaign assets are available at <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-hand-hygiene-day/2023>.

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Fig. 1. Poster for the “Save Lives: Clean Your Hands” campaign.