

WHO member countries approve steps to bolster health regulations to better brace for pandemics

June 2 2024



Air China flight crew members in hazmat suits walk through the arrivals area at Los Angeles International Airport in Los Angeles, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021. The World Health Organization says member countries on Saturday, June 1, 2024, approved a series of new steps to improve global preparedness for and response to pandemics like COVID-19 and mpox. Credit: AP Photo/Jae C. Hong, File

The World Health Organization says member countries on Saturday approved a series of new steps to improve global preparedness for and response to pandemics like COVID-19 and mpox.

Countries agreed to amend the International Health Regulations, which were adopted in 2005, such as by defining a "pandemic emergency" and helping developing countries gain better access to financing and [medical products](#), WHO said.

The agreement came as the U.N. agency wrapped up its six-day World Health Assembly this year, after plans to adopt a more sweeping pandemic "treaty" at the meeting were shelved largely over disagreements between developing countries and richer ones about better sharing of technology and the pathogens that trigger outbreaks.

But countries agreed to complete negotiations on the pandemic accord within the year, "at the latest," WHO said.

Lawrence Gostin, a public health law expert at Georgetown University, hailed a "big win for health security," and posted on X that the move "will simplify negotiations for the pandemic agreement."

WHO said countries have defined a pandemic emergency as a [communicable disease](#) that has a "wide geographical spread" or a high risk of one, and has exceeded or can exceed the ability of national health systems to respond.

It's also defined as an outbreak that has or could cause "substantial" economic or social disruption and requires quick international action, the agency said.

Yuanqiong Hu, a senior legal and [policy adviser](#) at Doctors without Borders, said that the changes adopted Saturday include "important

provisions addressing equity in access to health products during global health emergencies."

© 2024 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: WHO member countries approve steps to bolster health regulations to better brace for pandemics (2024, June 2) retrieved 20 June 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-06-member-countries-bolster-health-brace.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.