Public Health in Emergencies and Disasters

In 2016, the WFPHA welcomed the addition of a new working group on Public Health in Emergencies and Disasters (EDWG). The aim of the working group is to advocate for the integration of public health in disasters and emergencies.

The EDWG aims to influence international policy on public health in emergencies by bringing these issues to the public health community and a public health approach to the environmental advocacy community. Through work with partners and others, the Working Group focuses attention on human health effects of emergencies and disasters both natural and man-made and help shape global policies. It is working towards the successful integration of public health issues in the preparedness and response efforts for disasters and emergencies and in implementation of the health and disasters related 2030 Agenda, especially through SDG 3 (good health and well-being) and 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and within key institutions and entities. In addition, it is compiling and disseminating best practices, case studies and exchange of knowledge and experiences in using evidence-based public health interventions in emergencies and disasters to enable policy and planning. Through its work, the working group also creates awareness about public health issues in emergencies in the face of climate change, and other risk drivers. Its priorities for 2016-2017 include policy development for WFPHA, participation in relevant international and regional forums, and to create awareness about public health members of public health associations in their advocacy efforts at regional and national levels.

The Working Group will also contribute to the integration of topics on disasters and emergencies in public health education and training, advocate for the health and protection of population and health care workers during emergencies and promote quality health care for migrants and host communities in collaboration with key partners.