



SAIGE welcomes the new WHO guidelines on abortion care

10 March 2022

We welcome the newly issued WHO guidelines on abortion care that was launched last 9 March 2022. The new guideline issued a comprehensive set of recommendations based on the latest scientific evidence, spanning law and policy, clinical practice, and health service delivery. This updates and replaces the recommendations in all previous WHO guidelines on abortion care.¹

The guideline does not just highlight the need to remove unnecessary barriers², including the need to decriminalise abortion, but also to establish an enabling system that facilitates access to safe abortion. The document details recommendations on abortion regulation, provision of comprehensive abortion care, and emphasises quality abortion care that is safe, effective, available, accessible, and patient-centered.

Universal access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is fundamental to the fulfillment of health and well-being, full realisation of human rights and achieving gender equality. As a result of the lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic, when SRH information and services were sidelined and severely disrupted, WHO has included comprehensive abortion care in the list of essential health services.³ Moreover, for the first time, recommendations related to telemedicine to facilitate early medical abortion have been included, which is helpful in supporting access to abortion.

Towards the aim of generating recommendations to achieve the best possible individual and collective health outcomes, WHO has made a commitment to a comprehensive approach with integration of human rights and consideration for the underlying determinants of health in healthcare programmes and policies. The implementation of these new guidelines will strengthen programmes and policies on comprehensive abortion care and will facilitate the provision of the highest standard of care for women and pregnant people in all their diversity.

¹ Abortion care guideline. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022.

² <https://www.paho.org/en/news/9-3-2022-who-issues-new-guidelines-abortion-help-countries-deliver-lifesaving-care>

³ Abortion care guideline. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022.