PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IS THE PATHWAY TO UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

To promote prosperity and eradicate poverty, countries must ensure that all citizens have access to quality, affordable health services. In many parts of the world, lack of access continues to be a major concern.

At least half of the world’s population lacks access to essential health services such as family planning or child immunization.

BARRIERS TO HEALTH ACCESS INCLUDE:

1. Basic lack of quality health services
2. Distance to the nearest health facility
3. Overcrowding or restricted hours at facilities that impose long waiting times
4. Cost of the health services may deter use
5. Lack of information on available services
6. Lack of confidence in facilities and staff
7. Sociocultural barriers including constraints related to gender or age, beliefs, and cultural preference.

In order to achieve universal health coverage, Goal 3.8 outlined in the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a strong primary health care system needs to be in place.

90% of a community’s health needs can be met by a well-functioning primary health care system.

Strong primary health care systems ensure a focus on equity, access and quality of services by:

- Improving health over the course of life, from birth to old age
- Serving as an early warning mechanism to detect and stop disease outbreaks
- Supporting a more equitable distribution of health
- Leading to high-quality and cost-effective care for people and communities
- Empowering individuals, families, and communities to be active decision-makers about their health
- A healthy and prosperous future for all depends on strong primary health care

SOURCES