

Shaping the future of global health without borders: WCPH 2026 in Cape Town

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The global public health community is preparing for a landmark event, the 18th World Congress on Public Health (WCPH 2026), to take place in Cape Town, South Africa, 6–9 September 2026. Organized by the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) in collaboration with the Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA), the Congress will convene leaders, practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and advocates from around the world.

Under the theme ‘Health Without Borders: Equity, Inclusion, and Sustainability’, WCPH 2026 aims to confront the pressing health challenges of our time while fostering pathways for collaborative, sustainable solutions. Hosting the Congress in Southern Africa highlights the continent’s growing influence in shaping the global health agenda and provides a platform to integrate diverse regional perspectives into international dialogue.

The Congress will feature a rich program designed to inspire collaboration and innovation. Keynote presentations from internationally recognized experts, with diverse perspectives from Global North and South, will address critical public health issues, while workshops, panel discussions, and interactive sessions will explore practical strategies, foster skills development, and create opportunities for long-term partnerships. Special attention is given to students and early-career professionals, ensuring the next generation of public health leaders actively contributes to shaping the field.

We are also delighted to present a series of Plenary Sessions that will bring together leading voices to explore

the future of public health, including:

- Equity and Health
- Economics of Democracy and Public Health
- International Law and Global Treaties in Public Health
- Primary Health Care and the Health Workforce for Sustainable Health Equity
- Public Health in Conflict, War, and Peacebuilding
- Restoring Balance: Indigenous Knowledge Systems & Decolonizing Global Health
- One Health in a Changing World
- Imaging the Future of Public Health

All abstract proposals – for workshops, oral presentations, and poster sessions – must be submitted through the official WCPH 2026 portal. Accepted abstracts will be published in the Congress Abstracts Book in *Population Medicine*, and all submissions will undergo rigorous peer review by the International Scientific Committee. Contributors are encouraged to assign their abstracts to the most relevant track to ensure alignment with the Congress themes. Abstract submission will remain open until 31 January 2026.

WCPH 2026 is more than a conference, it is a catalyst for change. By bringing together voices from every corner of the globe, the Congress will strengthen networks, amplify innovative solutions, and promote equity, inclusion, and sustainability in public health practice, policy, and research.

For further information and updates, visit the official Congress website: <https://www.wcph.org>.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have completed and submitted the ICMJE Form for Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest and none was reported.

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ETHICAL APPROVAL AND INFORMED CONSENT

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DATA AVAILABILITY

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PROVENANCE AND PEER REVIEW

Commissioned; internally peer-reviewed.

DISCLAIMER

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors.