

47th World Hospital Congress begins in Rio de Janeiro



The 47th World Hospital Congress opened today, welcoming around 1250 delegates from 65 countries. The Congress takes place from 10 to 12 September in Rio de Janeiro.

Welcoming participants to Rio, and drawing on their extensive collective experience in the health sector and in public service, the ceremony was addressed in person by Dr Paulo Rebello, President of Brazil's National Supplementary Health Agency (ANS), Mrs Meiruze Freitas, Director at the Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency (ANVISA), Dr Daniel Soranz, Municipal Health Secretary of Rio, Dr Pedro Westphalen, Federal Deputy and the President of the Mixed Parliamentary Front in Defence of Health Services, and Caio Antonio Mello Souza, Subsecretary of the State of Rio de Janeiro for Health.

Dr Muna Tahlak, IHF President and President and CEO of Latifa Hospital in Dubai, welcomed the IHF's international network to its 47th Congress and spoke of the power of international knowledge exchange to transform healthcare delivery locally:

"What does it mean to be a contemporary healthcare leader? What does it demand of us? And how can we excel at it? These questions lie at the heart of our motivation to be here. The needs of the communities that we serve vary greatly, but as leaders we have much in common. So, we come together at Congress to rise to our shared challenges together. And the exchanges within our network keep us connected, always learning, so that, when we return home, we can do our best for our communities."

Demonstrating the power of collaboration to drive excellence, Dr Tahlak's welcome was followed by an address from Dr Adelvânio F. Morato, President of the Brazilian Hospital Federation (FBH):

"The more united we are, in solidarity with each other, prioritizing research and knowledge, promoting the constant improvement of our professionals and, equally important, exchanging experiences, the stronger we will be to face crises and challenges that may arise."

The Congress was then honoured by a recorded keynote address by Dr Jarbas Barbosa da Silva Jr., Director, Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization who shared words of encouragement on the ability of the gathered leaders to rise to the challenges for hospital management in the region:

"We promote the planning and expansion of infrastructures from an integrative perspective, focusing on the needs of the community. We address the lack of human resources for health by investing in continuous training, promoting equitable access to professional development opportunities. We promote strategies to improve the quality of care in all hospitals, prioritizing patient safety and implementing standardized systems... Investing in strengthening our hospitals in the region is an investment in strengthening health systems based on primary care, strengthening their role in networks and promoting equity in access to health, without a doubt."

Providing local context, the audience heard from Dr Daniel Soranz, Municipal Health Secretary of Rio:

"I invite all of you, in addition to the congress, to share and receive knowledge, to visit Rio de Janeiro, get to know our hospitals, our neighbourhoods and our culture. I hope that everyone takes advantage of every minute and moment of exchange to make our health systems develop more and more.

One in four Brazilians has a health plan, which is a significant number and demonstrates the size of this sector in the country. The message I want to convey is that it is necessary to look at society with the aim of developing good practices for the benefit of the population. We need to adopt stakeholder health, leaving aside the shareholder system. The only purpose must be access to quality care and sustainability in the sector."

Mrs Meiruze Freitas, Director at the Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency (ANVISA) shared reflections on the importance of innovation and sustainability in the future of health regulation and surveillance:

"Anvisa (Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency) recognizes its role in public health, coordination of health services and environmental sustainability as a major challenge. We intend to transform regulatory challenges into opportunities for innovation. It is imperative that we put the needs of patients as our main focus. We live in an era where AI affects decision making and it is necessary to maximize data quality. I draw attention to innovation being oriented towards new solutions that benefit patients and also reduce the carbon footprint. We position ourselves to lead meaningful change and improve the health of the communities we serve."

Closing the addresses in the ceremony, Caio Antonio Mello Souza, Subsecretary of the State of Rio de Janeiro for Health, reminded delegates that healthcare is fundamentally human-centred and human-powered:

"I want to remember the COVID-19 pandemic, as we all had many losses with the virus, but, like all crises, we also created improvements and the ability to reinvent ourselves. Rio de Janeiro created the CIS, Health Intelligence Centre, the largest health intelligence centre in Latin America. Our motto is: health is made up of people who take care of other people. The human being is the biggest and best tool that we can improve and use."

The Opening Ceremony paid tribute to the dedication and resilience of the healthcare workforce. In particular to those working in the Rio Grande do Sul region of southern Brazil who have been on the front line in response to the disaster affecting more than 2 million people in 2024.

The World Hospital Congress is the premier event for global hospital and healthcare leaders. This year it takes place at the Windsor Convention & Expo Center, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Over three days, leaders and decision-makers in the healthcare community will share knowledge and good practices, exchange new ideas and innovations, and network with other senior executives. This year's Congress features 40+ plenary and parallel sessions; more than 250 renowned speakers; 200+ poster presentations; an Innovation Hub featuring 27 solutions to challenges in healthcare settings; industry exhibitors; the IHF Awards 2024 Ceremony and Gala Dinner; and guided hospital visits in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

The annual World Hospital Congress is hosted in different regions of the world. The IHF will organize the 48th World Hospital Congress in collaboration with Geneva University Hospitals and the Canton of Geneva, Switzerland, taking place from 10 to 13 November 2025.

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