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## STATEMENT

### **FIRS Hails World Health Assembly Resolution as Turning Point for Lung Health**

The Forum of International Respiratory Societies ([FIRS](#)) applauds the World Health Assembly's (WHA) adoption of the [Integrated Lung Health Resolution](#), a critical step towards integrating lung health into universal health coverage, and closing the gaps that cost millions of lives each year.

Representing the world's leading professional respiratory societies, FIRS commends the WHA for formally recognising the immense - and overlooked - impact of lung conditions including asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), tuberculosis, respiratory infections, lung cancer and COVID-19.

Together these conditions affect over a billion people, yet access to essential treatment remains out of reach for many. According to the [Global Burden of Disease](#), respiratory conditions killed 17 million people in 2021 - including 4.1 million from COPD and asthma alone. Yet access to affordable, effective treatments remains limited, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

A recent [review](#) found that inhaled corticosteroids were available and affordable in just 30% of pharmacies and 36% of hospitals. Long-acting combination inhalers were available in less than 11% of pharmacies and only 5% of hospitals - far short of the [global target](#) of 80% for essential noncommunicable disease (NCD) medicines.

FIRS President Guy Marks said: "FIRS welcomes WHA recognition of the huge, and largely unrecognised, global burden of lung disease that disproportionately affects those in disadvantage populations."

The WHA resolution urges Member States to expand access to safe, effective, and affordable lung health interventions, and calls on WHO to help strengthen primary health care systems to deliver these services.

FIRS is already working to address these challenges through its campaign, [Increasing Access to Inhaled Medicines for COPD and Asthma](#). Working with WHO, the NCD Alliance and others, the campaign is advocating for:

- Updating WHO's [primary care guidelines](#) for chronic respiratory disease
- Ensuring key inhaled medicines are included in national drug lists and UHC schemes

- Supporting patients and clinicians with knowledge and tools to demand and deliver effective care

The campaign also aims to target Heads of State and drive commitments ahead of the upcoming [UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs](#). With only five years left to meet the Sustainable Development Goals - and just [19 countries on track to reach SDG 3.4](#) – the WHA resolution on lung health highlights a crucial but neglected area where coordinated action can deliver real progress.

**Contact: Fiona Salter** [Fiona.Salter@firsnet.org](mailto:Fiona.Salter@firsnet.org)

**Learn more about FIRS Improving Access to Inhaled Medicines campaign** [here](#)

### About FIRS

The Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) is an organisation comprised of the world's leading international respiratory societies, working together to improve lung health globally. FIRS members include the American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST), American Thoracic Society (ATS), Asian Pacific Society of Respirology (APSR), Asociación Latinoamericana del Tórax (ALAT), European Respiratory Society (ERS), International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), Pan African Thoracic Society (PATS), the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) and the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD).

