



Call for Action

Continuity of Care in General Practice/Family Medicine

The World Health Organization defines primary health care as a cornerstone of cost-effective and sustainable health care systems. General Practitioners/Family Physicians are key medical providers within the primary health care system.

In the context of General Practice/Family Medicine, we define continuity of care as *a longitudinal relationship between a patient/citizen and one General Practitioner/Family Physician of the patient's choice, backed by a team of other healthcare providers.*

Continuity of care is an essential element of high-quality General Practice/Family Medicine. There is good evidence and growing international consensus that continuity of care entails significant health benefits, both for patients and the health care system. It increases patient satisfaction, improves uptake of preventive measures and adherence to treatment recommendations. It decreases the use of out-of-hours care, the need for acute hospitalizations and, ultimately, it is associated with lower premature mortality.

Crucially, continuity within doctor–patient relationships is also good for the wellbeing of doctors.

The above knowledge is embedded in the 2020 statement on *Core Values and Principles of Nordic General Practice/Family Medicine* issued by The Nordic Federation of General Practice.

The 22nd Nordic Congress of General Practice, held in Stavanger 21st - 23rd of June 2022, encourages politicians and all other stakeholders of the health care service to support and facilitate sustainable health systems that promote relational continuity. This implies that all patients should have access to a General Practitioner/Family Physician of their own choice who knows them and their circumstances.

Stavanger, June 23rd 2022.

Marte Kvittum Fjanger, chair
Norwegian College of General Practice

Magnus Isacson, chair
Swedish College of General Practice

Bolette Friderichsen, chair
Danish College of General Practice

Margrét Olafía Tómasdóttir,
chair Icelandic College of Family Physicians

Juha Auvinen, chair
Finnish College of General Practice

Johann A. Sigurdsson, chair
Nordic Federation of General Practice

Olav Thorsen, chair
Congress Organizing Committee

Gunnar Tschudi-Bondevik, chair,
Congress Scientific Committee

Anna Stavdal, president
WONCA World