



UNITED NATIONS  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

## **10 key messages on Human Rights and COVID-19**

**The right to health** is an inclusive right extending not only to timely and appropriate health care but also to the **underlying determinants** of health, such as access to safe and potable water and adequate sanitation, an adequate supply of safe food, nutrition and housing, healthy occupational and environmental conditions, and access to health-related education and information. Measures to ensure principle of non-discrimination should include guidance to prevent stigma, ensure equal access for all, participation and accountability.

1. **Accessibility:** Health facilities, goods and services must be accessible physically as well as financially and on the basis of non-discrimination. Accessibility also implies the right to seek, receive and impart health-related information in an accessible format (for all, including persons with disabilities), but does not impair the right to have personal health data treated confidentially.
2. **Availability:** Functioning public health and healthcare facilities, goods and services must be available in sufficient quantity within a State.
3. **Participation:** The beneficiaries of healthcare services, facilities and goods should have a voice in the design and implementation of health policies which affect them.
4. **Accountability:** Duty bearers should be held accountable for meeting human rights obligations in the area of public health, including through the possibility of seeking effective remedies for breaches such as, for example, the denial of treatment.
5. **Acceptability:** The facilities, goods and services should also respect medical ethics, and be gender-sensitive and culturally appropriate. In other words, they should be medically and culturally acceptable.

6. **Good quality:** Health facilities, goods and services must be scientifically and medically appropriate and of good quality. This requires, among other things, trained health professionals, scientifically approved and unexpired drugs and hospital equipment, adequate sanitation and safe drinking water.
7. **Consent:** Guaranteeing free, prior, and informed consent is a fundamental feature of respecting an individual's autonomy, self-determination and human dignity and should be sort before any policy is implemented.
8. **Movement:** Ensure that any kind of limitation of the right to freedom of movement adheres to international human rights standards and is only imposed in case proportionate, within the existing domestic legal framework, sufficiently important to justify the limitation, and applied in a non-discriminatory way.
9. **Information:** Access to information should be made readable available and should be in line with the principle of "*do no harm*" and "*leave no one behind*". Special considerations must also be made regarding, language and cultural barriers and ensure that all vulnerable and marginalized groups, have equal access to information.
10. **Vulnerable and marginalized groups:** In order to ensure a human rights-based approach, States should ensure that the needs and rights of the most vulnerable parts of the population such as women, children, older person, poor, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ community, homeless persons, prison population and persons deprived of liberty, migrants, persons living with HIV, and internally displace people, and people living in informal settlements, are taken into consideration and protected at all times.