

Private Organizations for Patient Safety

Who we are and what we do



**World Health
Organization**

Private Organizations for Patient Safety (POPS) is saving patients' lives and protecting health workers by collaborating to enhance health-care safety.



Why POPS

Globally, millions of patients, but also health workers, are affected by unsafe or poor quality health-care practices. This can result in the transmission of infectious diseases including hepatitis and HIV and health care-associated infections (HAI), some treatable, some not. In the last decades, advances have led to effective and affordable interventions that aim to prevent harm to both patients and health workers.

More needs to be done to save lives and preserve resources that could be better spent on advancing health care.

The opportunity to harness collective energy, intelligence, innovation and resources has presented itself in recent years. The World Health Organization (WHO), as the specialized United Nations (UN) health agency, has looked beyond those normal stakeholders and advocates, to work with non-state actors where appropriate, still in the interest of all Member States. Positive relations already exist, demonstrating the possibility of collaborating without bias or self-interest.

A collaborative model called POPS (Private Organizations for Patient safety), was established by WHO with private sector industry to advance improvements around safer health-care globally, in the first instance through hand hygiene to tackle HAI. With the goal of achieving a greater impact in the prevention of avoidable patient and health-worker harm, POPS aims to allow for more proactive, coordinated engagement, and subsequently more strategic and focused action worldwide.

POPS is important as it is based on the principle of benefits to Member States, particularly those in low- and middle-income settings. The process of collaborative working also allows for a sense of overall community benefit with the sharing of intelligence, expertise and most importantly ownership of the challenge that is avoidable patient and health-worker harm. It provides an enhanced global presence for all those involved, supporting the greater reach intended in support of action.

How it works

POPS comprises a group of industry representatives and WHO staff working to reduce infections acquired through unsafe care practices. The group harnesses its collective strengths to align and improve uptake of WHO recommendations in different parts of the world.

Created in 2012, POPS includes industry representatives whose businesses, as well as corporate social responsibilities, focus on supporting the global agenda of preventing harm resulting from health-care practices.

The model initially invited collaboration with a range of private sector/industry representatives concerned with encouraging clean hands in health care. It has since progressed to focus also on reducing harm to patients and health workers through the unsafe use of syringes and other medical devices.

Hosted by WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, POPS is led by the Service Delivery and Safety Department and is administered by dedicated staff to ensure both success and governance. This is possible through POPS participant (company) payments to WHO to facilitate the working model, alongside committed funding from WHO.

Once part of POPS, members leverage their area of specialization by joining together in a moderated web-based 'platform'. The platform provides for bidirectional and early sharing of information and ideas, and progression of project work. Work is undertaken and overseen by technical groups, composed of POPS participants and led by a senior member of WHO staff. Technical and innovative contributions are the focus of all discussions, covering areas such as system change, education and research. By nature of the POPS agreement, shared governance, responsibility and positive relations lie at the heart of all activities, as well as regularly arranged face-to-face meetings that further facilitate annual progress.



As a WHO-facilitated collaborative, POPS is able to capitalize on the sum of its participants' comparative advantages with unique insights into health-care delivery around the globe. By funding projects POPS plays a unique role, causing no conflict with WHO's normative work.

Benefits of POPS

For Member States

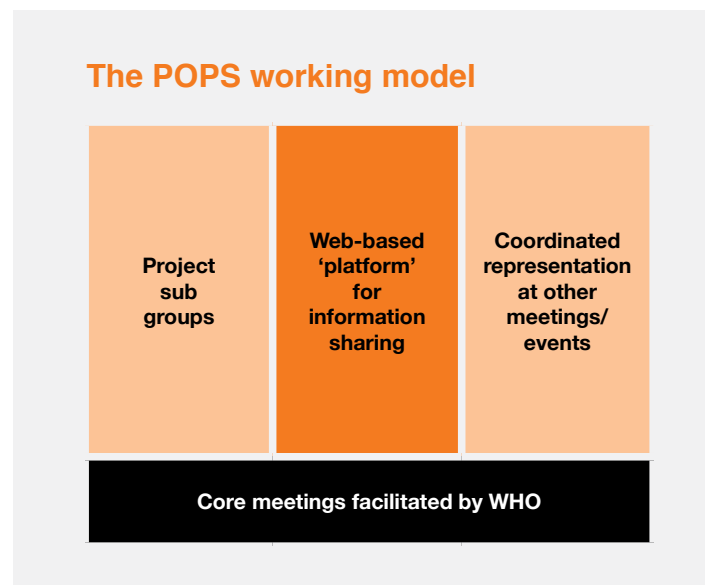
- Reduced HAI burden/harm through improved standards including hand hygiene and injection safety product availability
- More awareness of the need to reduce HAI/harm
- Possible spin-offs for example improved infrastructure, such as clean water, waste management and general improvements in hygiene.

For WHO

- Private sector aligned with WHO's aim of reducing HAI/health-care harm
- Promotion/availability of products aligned with WHO recommendations
- Continuous exchange of information and knowledge sharing
- Low- and middle-income settings (developing countries) provided with access to safe products, with support for improved infrastructure and funded educational development projects.

For Industry

- Easy access to guidance from WHO on quality standards, recommendations, campaign messages, etc
- Right to use a copyrighted POPS slogan
- Enhanced corporate image
- Access to information on global availability of products/resources
- Easy access to other relevant information from WHO and others involved in POPS.



Results so far

Target outcome: Scale-up and sustainability of action that will reduce harm and save lives and money by averting the spread of diseases caused by viruses and bacteria (including those resistant to antibiotics) to patients and health workers.

Unique and influential in its reach, each year a summary report is presented on POPS' achievements over the previous 12 months.

POPS does not just aim to count outcomes over time, for example, reductions in the number of people affected by avoidable harm in health care, it is also concerned with measuring and reporting the spread and impact of collaborative working.

Key results from POPS collaborative working include:

- Alignment of evidence-based, best practice messages, spread widely among health-care settings around the globe with the aim of raising awareness and furthering education and standards;
- Exploration of outstanding research questions/studies;
- Ethical promotion of safe devices/products;
- Funding the actual delivery of resources including, for example, alcohol-based handrub;
- Overcoming barriers to affordable, reliable availability of necessary resources to prevent harm caused by avoidable infections;
- Freeing up health worker time by saving patients from avoidable harm, which often results in longer hospital stays and the need for additional treatments such as antibiotics.

Examples of POPS projects

These examples pertain to successful projects for the POPS group working on hand hygiene improvement:

A global survey of health ‘consumer’ perceptions of HAI and hand hygiene in a range of middle and high-income countries, resulting in recommendations and ideas for global hand hygiene campaigning.

Provision of alcohol-based handrub bottles to hospitals in Africa. Firstly, to support work already under way in locally producing alcohol-based handrub; six hospitals in five different countries received almost 30 000 empty bottles as a short-term in-country solution. Secondly, to support the Ebola crisis, 200 000 bottles of handrub were provided to West Africa in a one-off donation exercise.

Awareness-raising and education achieved through POPS’ presence at key international conferences promoting WHO guideline recommendations to thousands of attendees.



More information on POPS, including outlined benefits to Member States, is featured here: <http://www.who.int/gpsc/pops/en/>