



WHO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOPIC A:

INTERNATIONAL BLOOD AVAILABILITY AND TRANSFUSION SAFETY

The first topic of this committee is the international blood availability and transfusion safety. Before we get into the technicalities of this topic, there are a few points that are important to keep in mind. Despite being a medically-focused topic, our committee will take a holistic approach, and our dais hopes that you commit to exploring the political and socioeconomic facets of this topic in addition to the medicine. Whether it is in treating severe injuries, supporting surgical interventions, or managing chronic illnesses, blood transfusions are a critical pillar of modern medicine and ensure global health and well-being. The international prevalence of disaster, war, environmental emergencies, pandemics, and other unpredictable tragedies makes the availability of blood across all nations, regardless of location or socioeconomic status, a crucial system for medical professionals to effectively plan. This level of access is just part of the equation. Safe blood transfusions, enabled by proper screening, testing, and handling are essential to preventing the spread of communicable diseases such as HIV, which disproportionately threaten low-income communities. The severity of this topic will require delegates to explore everything from regional blood distribution systems to the effects of blood donation on solidarity and compassion within a community. Breaking down this large scale issue in a new, smaller, light—with the help of the topic synopsis, of course—will help delegates take the necessary steps to give this topic the attention it deserves.

I personally chose this topic because of the impacts of blood unavailability and insufficiency in blood banks around the globe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Patients need blood transfusions in order to get life-saving procedures. But with the shut down of blood drives and the overall fear of approaching hospitals during and after the pandemic, blood availability has declined steadily. In countries with especially tumultuous healthcare systems and infrastructure, such a situation makes

it impossible for those in danger to receive the treatment they need. With a strong belief in not only access to healthcare, but also quality care for all people, I realize the importance that blood screenings, donations, and transfusions hold in maintaining the health of people. Because of this, it is important that we learn not only of the significance of blood transfusions in the role of healthcare, but also what we as individuals can do to contribute and influence the health outcomes of those suffering from illness. As the younger generation, I hope this topic brings about self-reflection and initiative to bring about change and knowledge in the field of health.

As you start your research, think about how your country responds and develops its healthcare system. Think about the country's economic level in terms of income, as well as health. Some countries will have similar transfusion systems, while others will be unique. You must identify the strengths and weaknesses of your country's blood transfusions' systems, as well as the overall accessibility of healthcare. Use both your country's strengths and weaknesses to your advantage in debate! Remember, the overall goal is to follow your country's policy while also improving the state of both your own, as well as other healthcare systems.

Some things to consider as you read, research, and write is the relationship between income levels and healthcare quality, as well as the distribution and age of patients who receive transfusions. For example, in higher income countries, patients over 60 years old are most frequently receiving transfusions, about 76 percent of all transfusions. While in lower income countries, up to 54 percent of transfusions are for children under the age of five. Also, consider both proactive and reactive strategies that will maintain the strength of the system and flow of blood that is both organized and effective. I would also remind you to keep in mind other countries' policies and healthcare and think about how gaps or discrepancies in accessibility can be bridged on similar interests.



March 8-10, 2024

72nd Session

whobmun72@bmun.org

TOPIC B:

DECLINE AND NEGLECT OF ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

Our second topic is the decline and neglect of adolescent mental health. With the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the discussion of the role of mental health at home and in the workforce has increased tenfold. The impact has been even more prevalent on the adolescent population. According to the CDC, in the decade leading up to the pandemic, feelings of persistent sadness and hopelessness as well as suicidal thoughts and behaviors were already increasing by about 40 percent among young people. Adolescence is a time of exponential development both physically and mentally. The significant changes that shape the individual's personality, emotions, and cognitive abilities have a profound impact on their future outcomes. Because of the sensitivity of such growth, it is incredibly important that the proper care in both preventative and reactive measures are taken in the protection of the younger generation's physical, social, and long-term health.

This topic is important to me because of the challenges and struggles both my friends and classmates have suffered in terms of mental health during high school, and even into college. Mental health is integral to overall physical and emotional growth. As teenagers, becoming more aware and in tune with the relationship between your mind and body is incredibly important, as it protects our overall well-being. Because of this, I want to help you as high school students become more aware of the importance of developing your mental growth, something that I was not completely familiar with, and still exploring during my high school years. Such a situation can be even worse in countries where adolescents are exposed to higher levels of poverty, abuse, or violence, which makes them more vulnerable to mental health problems. For example, one in seven 10 to 19 year olds experience a mental health disorder globally, which accounts for about 13 percent of a global burden of

disease in such an age group. Worse, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15 to 29 year olds. With recent increases in mental illnesses, risk-taking behaviors, and suicide, it is important that mental health is not only a discussion, but also an initiative in implementation of evidence-based systems that serve and focus on the younger generation.

As you start your research, think about the mental health strategies and treatments used in your country's healthcare system. With mental health promotion and harm prevention, countries can strengthen the individual's ability to build resilience in managing difficult situations and preventing increased vulnerability during adversity. Both the preventative and reactive methods that the country has implemented or supported is important in furthering the cause of improving the health of the youth. Some countries are more preventative in their focus towards adolescence, some countries are more reactive in treatment, and others do not have a stable system in addressing and resolving the mental health of the youth. Remember to keep in mind your country's policies and attitudes towards mental health and possible strategies that may open a wider and more comfortable discussion in promoting change.

As you read, note that a large part of the discussion of mental health, especially in the youth, is affected and impacted by cultural and social economic factors. Things like social exclusion, stigma, and fear are often the most common barriers that healthcare systems, organizations, and governments face in terms of reaching young adult populations. I would remind you to keep in mind how other countries' accessibility and cultural differences may impact their ability to promote and implement strategies meant to address the decline in neglect of adolescents' mental health care.