

## Advancing the right to health: **The vital role of law**



The report, published in 2017,  
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[http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/  
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## The vital role of law

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Effective laws and an enabling legal environment are essential to a healthy society. Most public health challenges – from infectious and non-communicable diseases to injuries, from mental illness to universal health coverage – have a legal component. Both at the global and domestic levels, law is a powerful tool for advancing the right to health. This tool is, however, often underutilized.

This report aims to raise awareness about the role that public health laws can play in advancing the right to health and creating the conditions for all people to live healthy lives. The report provides guidance about issues and requirements to be addressed during the process of developing or reforming public health laws, with case studies drawn from countries around the world to illustrate effective practices and critical features of effective public health legislation.

Advancing the Right to Health: The Vital Role of Law will be of interest to a wide range of health stakeholders. Within government, these include senior officials working in ministries of health,

and in related ministries that can significantly influence health through their actions and policies. They also include members of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government including parliamentarians, ministers, judicial officers and their advisers. Outside of government, the report will be of interest to members of health organizations, philanthropic organizations, the media, industry and business groups, academia, employer and labour organizations, and civil society organizations.

Advancing the Right to Health: The Vital Role of Law is the result of a collaboration between the World Health Organization, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University, Washington D.C., U.S.A, and Sydney Law School, The University of Sydney, Australia.