

WORLD LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE — WCPH 2026, Cape Town**Tuesday 8 September | 11:15 | Roof Terrace Room****Healthy Beginnings, Protected Futures: Scaling Impact in Pediatric RSV and Pneumococcal Immunization**

Pneumonia remains the leading infectious killer of children under five, claiming approximately 700,000 lives each year. RSV and pneumococcal disease together account for the majority of these deaths — and both are now preventable. RSV also causes bronchiolitis and other respiratory illness. Together, RSV and pneumococcal disease drive over 3.6 million hospitalizations in children under five each year, straining pediatric wards and ICU capacity, especially during seasonal peaks. Yet, prevention remains profoundly unequal: 97% of RSV deaths in children occur in low- and middle-income countries, where access to even basic supportive care is often limited. However, even in high-income countries where preventatives are available, there are discrepancies in uptake across socio-economic and demographic classes leaving those who are vulnerable unprotected. The tools exist. What is missing is the political will and the implementation frameworks to deploy them equitably and at scale.

This World Leadership Dialogue presents the WFPHA Call to Action on RSV and Pneumococcal Prevention, moving beyond the evidence — which is robust — to the harder questions of implementation. Results from early implementers demonstrate that impact is visible within a single season, making RSV and Pneumococcal Immunization not only a public health priority but a political opportunity. The session examines how countries can integrate these interventions into existing health systems, overcome financing barriers and build the public confidence needed to drive universal infant protection.

Chair**Prof. Michael Moore** — Chair, WFPHA International Immunization Policy Taskforce**Speakers****Prof. Rudzani Muloiwa** — Head of Department, Paediatrics and Child Health; Co-director, Vaccines for Africa Initiative (VACFA), University of Cape Town, South Africa**Dr. Faysal Farahat** - Director, Community and Public Health, Infection Prevention and Control Program, Ministry of National Guard Health Affairs (MNGHA), Saudi Arabia**Dr. Augustine Pereira** - Director of Public Health with Ireland's Health Service Executive (HSE)