



# Building a Dynamic Global Community of Media Professionals Reporting on Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has propelled health to the top of the world news agenda, requiring journalists everywhere to keep up with fast evolving scientific developments and underscoring the inextricable links between health, human rights, and issues around good governance. Along with the pandemic has come the 'infodemic' that has profoundly challenged media professionals to provide accurate, science-based information to their audiences in the face of an onslaught of misinformation.



*HJN Fellows attend the 2023 World Conference of Science Journalists in Medellín, Colombia.*

## Advancing Health Journalism Globally

Officially launched in 2020, the Internews Health Journalism Network (HJN) builds on decades of organizational experience in advancing health

journalism globally. Internews' health experience is rooted in training and support for media partners reporting on HIV in the early 2000s. It was further developed through responses to the Ebola outbreak in Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It includes work on maternal child health, and reproductive health and rights programs.

**Our goal is to empower journalists everywhere to report on a range of health issues, including emerging pathogen threats. This network is a vibrant media community committed to reporting regularly on health, that can also be rapidly mobilized to share vital health information during an emergency.**

## Our Members

As of June 2023, the network has over 1500 registered members from 85 countries. Membership is for individuals, media outlets, and established networks that regularly focus on health. Our members are journalists, health communicators, investigative reporters, content producers, media entrepreneurs, and digital health innovators. What they have in common is a passion for covering public health and for bringing marginalized voices into mainstream discussions about health rights and policy.

## What We Do

Internews support for this network strengthens scientific knowledge amongst health reporters, promotes cross-regional learning and peer support, nurtures engagement, sparks brave conversations around complex health topics, and offers opportunities for career development.

Our first two years of operation have focused on to the biggest health story of the 21st century, the COVID-19 global pandemic, vaccine development, rollout, and distribution. In our third year, we are pivoting to focus on emerging health needs and topics of interest to our members and the communities they serve. Our in-house group of health media experts – known as **Health Media Mentors** – is supporting and growing the HJN through targeted e-learning courses, specialized media trainings, and the creation of a broad range of media resources on health.

We offer our members the opportunity to access, contribute and share resources that can strengthen their work, collaborate with and benefit from the experience of peers, and find opportunities for career growth. We tailor our offerings to the various interests of our members and their audiences. These include virtual

events, resources for journalists, and panels that highlight the work of our members. Whenever possible, we offer these in languages other than English. Registered members get a heads up on grant and fellowship opportunities to support the production of health stories and related content.

Our goal is to create a collaborative space that encourages the exchange of ideas and inspires learning around health journalism as a discipline. In this effort, we strive to connect global health experts with local reporters and vice-versa because we firmly believe that this two-way exchange of information and expertise fuels innovative thinking and helps us bridge information gaps.



## Internews Health Journalism 101

*In 2023, the HJN developed an introduction to health journalism course for WhatsApp. This first pilot version is in English and available for 100 journalists in low-resource settings where internet connection is limited, and training opportunities are few and far in between.*

***“The HJN fellowship to the 2023 World Conference of Science Journalists in Colombia was an invaluable opportunity to enrich my understanding of science journalism, from ethical considerations to the inclusion (or exclusion) of indigenous voices in our field. Engaging in meaningful discussions with a diverse cohort of journalists widened my perspective and opened the door to the possibility of South-South solidarity.”***

*– Mahima Jain, health reporter from India*

For more information, please visit: [healthjournalism.internews.org](https://healthjournalism.internews.org)



Internews, an international nonprofit organization, empowers people worldwide with the trustworthy, high-quality news and information they need to make informed decisions, participate in their communities, and hold institutions to account.