



PAHO, IDB and World Bank launch alliance to strengthen primary health care in the Americas



Montevideo, Uruguay, 4 December 2023 (PAHO) – The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank (WB) today launched the [Alliance for Primary Health Care in the Americas](#), a collaboration to boost investment, innovation and implementation of policies and initiatives aimed at transforming health systems in the region with a focus on primary health care.

The announcement comes at a time when countries are making efforts to recover from the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a setback in many health indicators and highlighted the structural weaknesses of the health and social protection sectors to respond effectively to a public health emergency.

"Primary health care is our path to recover lost progress and an essential investment to address our greatest health and development challenges," Dr.

Jarbas Barbosa, PAHO Director, said during the Regional Forum: Alliance for Primary Health Care in the Americas, which takes place until 6 December in Uruguay. "The creation of this new alliance is more necessary than ever to accelerate progress in the countries through collective and concerted action," he added.

It is estimated that one third of the population of the Americas has unmet health care needs, even before the pandemic. This percentage ranges from 55% in lower middle-income countries to 12% in high-income countries. There are also serious inequalities in the way health care is delivered, distributed and made available to the population.

Primary health care can help close this gap by ensuring that people receive comprehensive, quality care for their health needs throughout their lives - not just for a specific set of diseases - and as close as possible to their homes.

"To achieve effective and equitable primary health care, it is essential to adopt an intersectoral approach. This not only involves the health field, but also other sectors, coordinating efforts among different stakeholders. The creation of this alliance represents a crucial step in this direction, providing a collaborative platform that supports our countries in this task," Ana María Ibáñez, Vice President of Sectors and Knowledge at the IDB said.

Strengthening PHC also implies making the necessary investments in health personnel, infrastructure, labor, and education. There is currently a deficit of 6 million health workers in the Americas, a gap that must be closed so that the health sector can provide the care people need and be more resilient in the face of future crises.

"We celebrate the launch of the Alliance for Primary Health Care in the Americas, with the purpose of promoting healthy environments, preventing disease and saving lives.

It is urgent that we strengthen primary care and expand access to quality, equitable, efficient and resilient health systems. Political commitment and the implementation of state policies are essential to ensure impact and to benefit people, our primary common goal," Carlos Felipe Jaramillo, Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean of the World Bank said.

The countries of the world, including those in the Americas region, have committed to renew and expand primary health care as the cornerstone of a sustainable health system, as well as to expand coverage and ensure universal access to health and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to health and health security.

The new partnership between PAHO, the IDB and the World Bank can act as a catalyst to drive the changes to ensure these commitments are reached. This

partnership will collectively support the development of national PHC investment plans, provide guidance to countries to strengthen the resilience and capacity of their health systems, and cooperate to design and implement evidence-based interventions tailored to specific contexts and challenges.

The joint efforts of the three organizations will also seek to foster innovation to accelerate actions and guarantee the right to health, including digital transformation - such as telehealth to better reach underserved areas - and new medicines and vaccines.

Note to editors

Primary health care (PHC) is a society-wide approach to health that aims to maximize the level and distribution of health and wellness services through three components: a) integrated health services focused on primary care and essential public health functions; b) multisectoral policy and action; and c) empowerment of individuals and communities.

Health systems built on the foundation of primary health care are essential to achieve universal access to health.

About PAHO: The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) works with the countries of the Americas to improve the health and quality of life of its population. Founded in 1902, it is the world's oldest international public health agency. It serves as the Regional Office of WHO for the Americas and is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American system. For more information, www.paho.org

About IDB: The Inter-American Development Bank is devoted to improving lives. Established in 1959, the IDB is a leading source of long-term financing for economic, social, and institutional development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The IDB also conducts cutting-edge research projects and provides policy advice, technical assistance, and training to public- and private-sector clients throughout the region. For more information, visit www.iadb.org/en

About the World Bank: The World Bank Group has a bold vision: to create a world free of poverty on a livable planet. In more than 100 countries, the World Bank Group provides financing, advice, and innovative solutions that improve lives by creating jobs, strengthening economic growth, and confronting the most urgent global development challenges. The World Bank Group is one of the largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries. It consists of the World Bank, including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA); the International Finance Corporation (IFC); the Multilateral Investment Guarantee

Agency (MIGA); and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). For more information, please visit www.worldbank.org.

Links

Regional Forum: Alliance for Primary Health Care in the Americas

<https://www.paho.org/en/events/regional-forum-alliance-primary-health-care-americas>

Video Alliance for Primary Health Care: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JegoJvDeBkE>

[Alliance for Primary Health Care in the Americas: Framework Document - PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization](#)

To follow the regional forum live: <https://www.youtube.com/@PAHOTV>

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