



PAHO launches new information platform on health and migration in the Americas

Number of migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean has more than doubled since 2005 to 15 million in 2022, highlighting the need to strengthen data-driven policies to protect their right to health



Washington, DC, 16 May, 2022 (PAHO) – The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) today launched the Information Platform on Health and Migration in the Americas, a new initiative to help countries safeguard the right to health of migrants in the region.

The Americas currently faces one of the largest situations of human displacement in the world, with the number of migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean more than doubling since 2005 to 15 million in 2022, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

However, data gaps on health and migration present challenges when it comes to the development of informed public health interventions for migrants.

The new platform aims to address the lack of regional data on migration and health by providing countries with an easy-to-use interactive digital repository of related research and information from across the Americas. This will facilitate knowledge sharing and enable governments to develop policy and initiatives that respond to the needs of the growing number of migrants.

In the Americas, poverty, violence, political instability, food insecurity, economic hardship and environmental events are among the primary drivers of migration. The region is also characterized by migratory flows northward, both from within the continent itself, as well as from parts of Africa and Asia.

The long-lasting social, health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of these issues.

“Today, millions of migrants in the region are facing challenges at every stage of the migratory process, without access to primary health care services, medicines, vaccines, or mental health services and psychosocial support,” said Dr. Jarbas Barbosa, PAHO Assistant Director.

“Linguistic and cultural differences and discrimination are among the number of variants hindering the timely access to care for migrant populations,” he added.

The platform was developed in collaboration with the University of Torcuato Di Tella in Argentina and the Universidad del Desarrollo in Chile, and will provide governments with information on policy, legal and regulatory frameworks on health and migration from 19 countries in the region and serve as a repository for scientific literature on the topic.

The Information Platform is intended to galvanize “action to protect migrants’ health, the health of populations in host countries and to move us closer to achieving Universal Health,” Dr. Barbosa said.

Health and Migration in the Americas

Millions of migrants in the Americas face a number of barriers to health including lack of access to primary health care, medicines, vaccines and mental health services.

Migrants may also experience a higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to poor living and working conditions that prevent social distancing, particularly in shelters.

During the migration process, children, and adolescent migrants, as well as older migrants and pregnant women, also face additional risks to their health including disrupted pre- and post-natal services, dehydration, hypertension, and exposure to gender-based violence and abuse.

Links

[Recording - Launch Event](#)

[Health and Migration in the Americas - Information Platform](#)

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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.