

PAHO



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Americas

News release

PAHO and Spain sign agreement to strengthen organ donation and transplant in the Americas



Washington, DC, 6 March 2023 (PAHO)- The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Ministry of Health of the Government of Spain today signed an agreement to strengthen organ donation and transplant in the Americas.

“Spain is a very important partner of PAHO thanks to its support of key initiatives in the region,” Dr. Jarbas Barbosa, PAHO Director, said at the signing of the

memorandum of understanding with the Minister of Health of the Government of Spain, Carolina Darias, in Washington D.C.

During the meeting, various areas of cooperation were discussed including primary health care; vaccine production; medicines and health technologies in the region; antimicrobial resistance; equity, gender and cultural diversity, and vaccination against COVID-19.

“Spain is a constant ally of the region,” Minister Darias said, highlighting that the new agreement will facilitate a meeting of the Ibero-American Network/Council for Donation and Transplant, a key initiative to improve legislative matters, professional training, and the discussion of ethical and social aspects of organ donation and transplant. The Network is made up of 21 countries in Latin America, Spain and Portugal.

In 2021, more than 58,000 transplants were performed in the Americas, according to the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Global Observatory on Donation and Transplantation (GODT), managed by the National Transplant Organization (ONT) of Spain. This number is not enough to meet demand, leaving thousands of people on the waiting list.

As part of the memorandum, activities were also agreed to support PAHO’s Strategy and Plan of Action on Donation and Equitable Access to Organ, Tissue, and Cell Transplants 2019-2030.

Although the region has the highest deceased donor rate per million people of the six WHO regions, this rate varies considerably between countries. The COVID-19 pandemic also led to a sharp reduction in donation rates and, in some cases, the closure of donation and transplant services.

The memorandum agreements will be implemented by technical teams of PAHO and ONT, an agency of the Ministry of Health of Spain and WHO collaborating center, recognized globally as a highly effective model for addressing organ shortages.

PAHO engages in technical cooperation with national donation and transplant programs in the region to ensure availability and access to organs, tissue and cells, as well as transparency and the fight against organ and tissue trafficking.

The collaboration between Spain and PAHO began in 1980, when the country joined PAHO as an Observer State. Since then, Spain has become a key partner in areas such as resilient health systems, and access to quality services; emergency

preparedness and response; and the fight against infectious diseases.

Spain has also been a key partner in pandemic response efforts in the Americas, supporting vaccination against COVID-19 with the contribution of more than 22 million vaccines to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Links

[Strategy and Plan of Action on Donation and Equitable Access to Organ, Tissue, and Cell Transplants 2019-2030](#)

[Ibero-American Network/Council for Donation and Transplant](#)

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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.