

BOLIVIA

An Opportunity to Improve the Health of Communities, Women, and Children in the Americas

PARTNERSHIP TO ELIMINATE TRACHOMA AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM

Bolivia joins regional efforts to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem

Bolivia will be searching for trachoma in prioritized communities, as part of the regional initiative to eliminate this disease.

This initiative is aligned with PAHO's initiative for the elimination of communicable diseases and related conditions, which aims to eliminate more than 30 diseases by 2030, with a common, integrated, and sustainable approach, promoting linkages and synergies, within the health system and with other sectors.

Trachoma is the leading cause of infectious blindness in the world. It affects people living in vulnerable conditions, especially women and children. In the Americas, Mexico eliminated trachoma in 2017; in Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, and Peru, about 5.6 million people are at risk of the disease.

As part of the initiative to declare the Americas trachoma-free, actions have been initiated to determine whether more populations are affected by the disease beyond those countries. Bolivia is one of the countries where rapid assessments will be carried out to meet this objective.

#EndTrachoma

What is ocular trachoma?

Ocular trachoma is an eye infection transmitted by direct contact with people infected with *Chlamydia trachomatis* bacteria.



Recurrent infections in children living in communities with poor access to health services, water, and basic sanitation can lead to **chronic damage**, such as the eyelashes turning inwards. This causes pain and, if left untreated, can lead to visual impairment and blindness in adulthood.

What actions will be taken in Bolivia to step up efforts to eliminate trachoma?

Through the partnership and collaboration between the Ministry of Health and Sports of Bolivia, the Government of Canada, and the Pan American Health Organization, the following actions will be taken over five years, starting in 2023:

- ▶ Trachoma surveillance in communities living in conditions in which this disease is suspected to be a public health problem.
- ▶ Integrated actions to combat blindness. Trachoma surveillance will be an opportunity to move towards integrated approaches to eye health in populations living in conditions of vulnerability.
- ▶ Comprehensive approach taken by field brigades coordinated with the Health Promotion area, the Bono Juana Azurduy program, Community and Intercultural Family Health (SAFCI), and the Visual Health program, under the leadership of the General Directorate of Traditional Medicine (Ministry of Health and Sports of Bolivia).



What are the expected results of the partnership?

Confirm the presence or absence of trachoma in prioritized communities.

Based on this evidence, it will be determined what actions need to be implemented.

Promote integrated eye health actions.

National and subnational capacities will have been strengthened to provide health services with a gender and intercultural approaches.



● Prioritized areas for trachoma assessments

