

PAHO with other intergovernmental organizations reached a consensus on the document *Radiation Protection and Safety of Radiation Sources: International Basic Safety Standards (the BSS)* as the basis for the establishment of requirements for governments, regulatory bodies, health authorities and users.

Several radiation accidents and overexposures of patients have occurred in the Region, some of them with casualties. We assist Member States in the preparation for, and response to radiological emergencies.

Mission:

To strengthen the assessment, incorporation, regulation, management, and utilization of appropriate health technologies in medical imaging and radiotherapy services.

To provide technical cooperation to ensure radiation protection for the public, workers, patients and the environment.

Vision:

To become the major catalyst for access, equity, quality, safety and effectiveness of radiological services in the Americas.

Our Values:

Equity, Excellence, Solidarity, Respect and Integrity.

PAHO Radiological Health Program



**Serving and Protecting
the Americas' Health**

2013

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Who We Are

The radiological health program of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) was established in 1960. We are located within the Area of Health Systems and Services (HSS). We carry out our work and coordinate with strategic partners including United Nations' organizations, PAHO/WHO collaborating centers, as well as professional and scientific associations.

What We Do

Our commitment is to provide the highest level of technical cooperation to PAHO Member States in the following areas:

- Medical Imaging
- Radiation Therapy
- Health Technology Assessment and Management
- Radiation Protection and Safety and Radiological Emergencies

Medical Imaging Services

Medical imaging encompasses a wide spectrum of clinical applications which include diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of common diseases with high incidence in the population such as respiratory diseases, injuries, digestive conditions,

monitoring of gestation, and mammary pathologies, among others. Also included are more complex diseases such as cancer, AIDS, disorders of the central nervous system and cardiovascular diseases.

Since the effectiveness of the health care provided depends on the quality of these services, we assist Member States in developing well trained professionals, and implementing quality assurance programs. The aim is to achieve a well-oriented clinical diagnosis with optimal levels of radiation for the patients. We also evaluate the provision of these services to ensure access and equity.

Radiation Therapy Services

Cancer is the second cause of death in the Region of the Americas, and its incidence is expected to increase considerably. Radiation therapy will continue to play a key role in cancer treatment in the next decades. Its curative and palliative function is particularly important in several pathologies.

We assist Member States to improve the effectiveness of treatments and to ensure patient safety by implementing comprehensive quality assurance programs. We also cooperate to evaluate the provision of these services to ensure access and equity as well as their proper integration in the National Plans for Cancer Control.

Health Technology Assessment and Management

The high costs associated with medical imaging and radiotherapy services, both in the initial technology investment and in its operation, impose the need for careful planning and management. Aspects such as the initial cost, maintenance, geographical distribution and human resources availability should be carefully considered for adequate management. The decision to incorporate radiological technology should always be preceded by a thorough study of feasibility or a pre-investment study.

We assist Member States in the assessment and management of radiological technologies. Our initiatives are aimed at striking a balance between incorporation of new technology and its appropriateness in the local circumstances to improve access and quality.

Radiation Protection and Safety, and Radiological Emergencies

The high risk from exposure to radiation, either in medical, industrial or research applications, makes it necessary to adopt special measures for the protection of patients, workers, public, and the environment against its adverse effects.