

Hospitals in an integrated health system : Expert meeting in Caribbean region, October 2012

IHF was invited by the Pan American Health Organization to an expert meeting to develop a framework for integrated health systems with the Caribbean countries. A representative of the American Hospital Association was also present (Steven Thompson from Johns Hopkins International)

Meeting objectives:

? To validate the information from the series of managers' meetings held in countries and provide a sub-regional perspective on the future of hospitals and the development of IHSDNs.

? To determine strategic lines for the Regional Agenda for Hospitals in IHSDNs from the perspective of the English-speaking Member States.

This meeting allowed participants to consider how they could propose guidance for the evolution of the more integrated service delivery system with the overarching goal of reaching universal coverage.

IHF presented the key challenges hospitals are facing for effective integration of health services, and the possible responses for a way forward. Although the situation of the Caribbean is very specific with small groups of populations that have large distances between them, the core principles for integrated services are applicable. These countries also face the same trends of evolution that other regions are facing. This meeting was also an opportunity to discuss a report on trends of evolutions in hospitals from a global perspective: <http://www.paho.org/agenda-hospitals-english-speaking>

Summary of Conclusions/Recommendations from the meeting 1. Hospitals faced with similar challenges:

? Epidemiologic/demographic challenges: Chronic NCDs, aging population, urbanization, violence and trauma, re-emerging diseases.

? Systemic Challenges: Poor planning and use of resources (HR, Finance, Strategic Plans, technology); lack of efficient/effective organization (centralized, poor-communication, duplication of structures); Need to strengthen Primary level.

? Population: Increased expectations, lack of awareness on hospital role.

? Political interference

2. There is a need for the use of social media for public information, engaging public in what happens with health facilities so they can understand functions; Need for health education to address lifestyle issues affecting population's health.

3. Hospitals represent a crucial link in the system.

4. Without functioning as a network, primary level services and hospital services will continue to suffer the same problems now and in the future. More investment needs to be made at primary level, including social service support (community based centers for long term care).

5. Systems must be sensitive to 'internal' and 'external' customers, through more effective HR support and people focused services, all of which follow along the continuum of care.

6. There needs to be an establishment of partnerships with private sector.

Recommended reading: http://new.paho.org/sur/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=88&Itemid=