



## Vaccination Week in the Americas – Grenada: 2015

*Allyson Clouden - Senior Community Health Nurse, Ministry of Health, Grenada*

Grenada joined the rest of the Region in observing the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA), April 25<sup>th</sup> – May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015. VWA was launched with a radio and television address to the nation by the Minister of Health. Prior to the launch, a live media interview/discussion was held with the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) manager and a district medical officer, which aired on television and radio, thus further increasing public awareness on the importance of immunization and encouraging the acceptance of vaccines among the population. Radio talks were also held by the family nurse practitioner and other nurses in Carriacou, one of the sister islands.

In collaboration with PAHO, public service announcements were created and aired several days throughout the week. Posters and stickers promoting vaccination were also distributed to clinics.



*Teachers, students and medical staff pose for a photo with their VWA exercise books after a street march in one of the districts.*

Other activities targeting school children and parents to increase awareness included street marches with pre and primary school students, a jingle competition in a secondary school on the VWA slogan, quizzes and talks targeting grade 5 students of selected primary schools, educational sessions on IPV at parent teachers' association meetings and at clinics and sessions on immunization for day care attendants and workers.

In one district, a road relay among eight secondary schools was also conducted. The race was escorted by police and accompanied by a vehicle from which pre-recorded vaccination messages and songs were aired.

An immunization awards ceremony attended by the Minister of Health and chief medical officer was held at the end of the week's activities, where prizes were presented to the winners of the Immunization Quiz for Registered Nurses and two annual awards: the Windward Islands Research and Education

Foundation's (WINDREF) Challenge Trophy for the district with the highest vaccination coverage and the Gre carpet Challenge Plaque for accurate, complete and timely submission of immunization data were also presented to two health districts.

The week of activities was a success and helped to further improve public awareness on the importance of vaccination for the health and well-being of children and families.



## XXIII Meeting of PAHO's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Vaccine-preventable Diseases

*Cara Janusz, Gabriela Felix, Octavia Silva, Cuauhtemoc Ruiz Matus. PAHO-Washington, DC*

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Location</b>     | Varadero, Cuba                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Dates</b>        | 1-3 July, 2015                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Participants</b> | 190 participants from 35 countries in the Region were present at the 2015 meeting, including the TAG members, National EPI Managers, individuals responsible for epidemiological surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases, NITAG presidents, PAHO immunization staff and representatives from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), among other immunization partners and experts. |
| <b>Purpose</b>      | To review the regional progress on selected topics and issue recommendations to address the current and future challenges faced by national immunization programs in the Region of the Americas.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

PAHO's Assistant Director, Dr. Francisco Becerra and the Vice Minister of Health of Cuba, Dr. Jose Angel Portal Miranda, opened the meeting by welcoming participants and providing introductory remarks. Dr. Peter Figueroa, was then introduced as the newly appointed TAG Chair, a role he served in interim during the XXII TAG meeting after the passing of the former chair Dr. Ciro de Quadros in 2014. Prior to the first technical session, a moment of silence was observed in memory of Dr. de Quadros.

The topics discussed in the 2015 XXIII TAG Meeting included:

- Polio eradication
- Monitoring immunization progress with the WHO/UNICEF Joint Reporting Form (JRF)
- Ensuring timely access to quality vaccines through PAHO's Revolving Fund
- Maternal immunization
- Measles elimination
- HPV vaccination
- Surveillance of new vaccines
- Missed vaccination opportunities
- Neonatal tetanus elimination
- Dengue vaccine development
- National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAGs)
- Cholera and the oral cholera vaccine stockpile
- Rotavirus vaccination
- Influenza vaccination in tropical areas
- Use of auto-disable syringes
- Control/elimination of Hepatitis B



# PAHO Immunization GIN Articles



(GLOBAL IMMUNIZATION NEWSLETTER)

In addition to discussing these topics, the 2015 PAHO Immunization Award was given to Dr. Elizabeth Ferdinand and Barbara Cristina Marinho Souza.



*Participants at the 2015 XXIII TAG Meeting in Varadero, Cuba.*

The TAG members acknowledged the contribution from the PAHO Secretariat to the meeting's success. The 2015 TAG Report with recommendations from the TAG members will soon be available at this [link](#).