



May 2019

PAHO's Immunization Newsletter celebrates 40 years and is now available in Portuguese!

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May 2019 marks the 40th anniversary of the Immunization Newsletter! Started by Ciro de Quadros and PAHO's Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), the first issue of the Immunization Newsletter was published in English and Spanish in May 1979. Over the past decades, the Newsletter's audience has grown to reach 7,000 people across 138 countries all over the world.



Past and present

The late Luis Carlos Ochoa, chief of PAHO's Division of Disease Prevention and Control in 1979, introduced the then-named "EPI Newsletter" as a way for immunization nationals from the Region of the Americas to exchange experiences, knowledge and information. This continues to be the Newsletter's objective, with additional attention paid to technical excellence, information on all aspects of immunization program implementation, and any noteworthy events and developments.

Over the last 40 years, the EPI Newsletter has changed its name, appearance, format and added languages for wider access and use. The title was changed to "Immunization Newsletter" in June 2005, and changes to the Newsletter's design were reflected in this issue and again in April 2013. French was added to the lineup of available languages in 2001, followed by Portuguese in 2019. Initially, the Newsletter was only physically published and mailed. Since email arrived at PAHO circa 1995 (anyone remember cc:Mail?), it has been emailed out as well.

Looking ahead

The editorial team is so grateful to all who have contributed articles to the Newsletter over the years - you are the reason the editors have been able to consistently put out issues for 40 years, and you have greatly contributed to the legacy that is the Immunization Newsletter. The Newsletter is, in fact, for you and by you.

For the future, we hope that the Newsletter continues to share experiences from countries, document EPI developments in the Region, and provide a platform for those who have something they want to say on the topic of immunization. We hope that it continues to gain readers and strongly engages its current readers for many, many years to come.



If you would like to subscribe to the Immunization Newsletter, just send an email to Octavia Silva at silvao@paho.org or Martha Velandia at velandiam@paho.org.

To see past and current issues of the Newsletter, please [click here](#).

Victor Gomez Serna, a true professor for healthcare workers in the cold chain for the Americas

Peter Carrasco and Nora Lucia Rodriguez, PAHO/WHO

Victor Gomez, who was teaching classes on repair and maintenance of domestic refrigerators at the SENATI (Servicio Nacional de Adiestramiento en Trabajo Industrial/National Service for Industrial Labor Training) joined the PAHO IM team in 1982.

Before working for SENATI, Gomez worked at the National Institute of Health, and oversaw research and the preparation of viral and bacterial vaccines for human use. His additional duties also included being chief of the department that produced lyophilization of vaccines.

Gomez's hands-on classes were quite effective in imparting the required knowledge to teach his students and thereby provide them with the abilities to properly diagnose the reasons why a refrigerator was not in working order and proceed to take the required action. PAHO organized three workshops with SENATI and Gomez.

PAHO's Immunization Program integrated Gomez as part of the Regional Cold Chain team to support PAHO's efforts in the areas of research and development at CIMDER's Cold Chain Focal Point in Cali, Colombia (Rural/Center for Multidisciplinary Studies in Rural Development). Gomez applied his technical knowledge to evaluate the performance of refrigerators manufactured by Latin American companies for the possible storage of vaccines.

As part of the EPI Middle Level Training events, Gomez oversees teaching health care workers the maintenance of their refrigeration equipment and vaccine handling. And he is involved in the planning of cold chain operations.

Gomez was a key element when PAHO/IM began to carry-out in-depth cold chain inventories and assessments in countries. In 1985, Gomez and Peter Carrasco were pioneers in delivering



Victor Gomez.
Credit: Nora Lucia Rodriguez.



Victor Gomez.
Credit: Nora Lucia Rodriguez.



the first course on Supervision of the Cold Chain, held in Guatemala, to instruct supervisors on methods to analyze data for evaluating operations to improve cold chain and supply chain activities.

To this day, Gomez continues to be involved in preparing blueprints for the construction warehouses that house cold rooms for vaccine storage.

Healthcare workers – past and present – of national immunization programs salute Victor Gomez for his uncompromising commitment and dedication to them.