



**Regional Forum on Scaling Up Health Systems based on PHC**  
*Trends, Lessons Learned and Challenges in Strengthening the Steering Role, Integrating Services and Systems and Building Public Health Capacity*



referral and counter-referral systems.

The reorientation of health systems towards PHC also requires a greater emphasis on health promotion and prevention. This includes links with the Essential Public Health Functions (EPHF).

Forum activities will emphasize regional and national experiences and

promote active participation and discussion. Participants will include close to 100 senior level representatives from ministries of Health and Social Insurance, academic and scientific institutions, and civil society organizations in LAC countries, as well as multilateral and bilateral technical and financial cooperation agencies with a presence in the Region.

The Regional Forum will focus on specific country experiences, while also adopting a prospective outlook, generating policy options and proposals for the implementation of PHC-based systems. The three-day forum will include panels, plenary discussions and working group sessions. The latter will focus more specifically on sharing country experiences and on the identification of policies and strategies for scaling up health systems based on PHC.

The Regional Forum organized by the Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will focus this year on strengthening health systems based on Primary Health Care (PHC). The Forum will take place in Quito, Ecuador from 29-31 October and it is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the strategies required to scale up national health systems based on PHC, including a strong steering role by the National Health Authority (NHA).

At the health services level, PHC-based health systems need to provide comprehensive and integrated care that addresses the majority of health care needs and demands of the population. They should work in an integrated manner developing mechanisms that coordinate care across the entire spectrum of services, including networks and

**The main objectives of the Regional Forum are:**

1. To review regional experiences in the implementation of PHC-based systems, with a particular focus on the steering role of the National Health Authority and the integration of programs and services within the health system.
2. To promote a debate regarding the potential for replication and applicability of these experiences to other contexts, and discuss the linkages between public health, the Essential Public Health Functions (EPHF) and the interventions needed to implement PHC-based health systems.
3. To discuss the obstacles and requirements to overcome exclusion, fragmentation, and segmentation in health systems and to exchange views on the policies, interventions, and strategies currently being implemented by the countries to confront these challenges.
4. Identify the needs for technical/financial cooperation to cope with the issues mentioned above and to scale up health systems based on PHC.

**WHAT'S NEW?**



**Is It Possible to Scale-Up Health Systems based on Primary Health Care?** This paper introduces the concept of scaling-up in the context of health systems, presents the essential elements of the PHC-based health system proposed by PAHO/WHO, and provides an analysis of the international experience scaling-up vertical programs.

**Public Health Capacity in Latin America and the Caribbean: Assessment and Strengthening** This paper discusses the concept of Public Health Capacity and the five elements that comprise it, outlining existing weaknesses, and identifying some strengthening strategies. The paper also discusses the application of several assessment tools developed by PAHO and other institutions to measure PH capacity.



**The Renewal of Primary Health Care in the Americas** This PAHO/WHO position paper builds upon the legacy of Alma Ata and the PHC movement, distills lessons learned from PHC and health reform experiences, and proposes a set of key values, principles, and elements essential for building health systems based on PHC.

**Steering Role of the National Health Authority (NHA): Performance and Strengthening** This document presents a methodology for the performance evaluation of the NHA steering role as it relates to the capacity to Conduct/Lead, Regulate, Deliver Health Services, Secure Financing and Insurance, and execute the Essential Public Health Functions.



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