



Key Facts about PAHO

- Founded in 1902, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is the world's oldest international public health agency. Its essential mission is to strengthen national and local health systems and improve health outcomes for all people in the Americas.
- During its century-plus existence, PAHO has catalyzed Pan American cooperation that has contributed to such hemispheric health achievements as:
 - A gain of 30 years in average life expectancy since 1902.
 - The eradication of smallpox and polio from the Americas.
 - The elimination of endemic transmission of measles, rubella and congenital rubella syndrome.
 - Major reductions in infant and child mortality.
 - Significant expansions of health coverage for poor and vulnerable populations in its member countries.
- PAHO has scientific and technical experts in its Washington, D.C., headquarters, 28 country offices, and four scientific centers. It also partners with nearly 200 PAHO/WHO Collaborating Centers in 15 countries of the Americas.
- PAHO provides technical cooperation in epidemic alert and response, disaster preparedness, health services organization and financing, immunization, nutrition, environmental health, mental health, road safety, health legislation, access to medicines and technologies, regulatory capacity, and other areas.
- PAHO assists countries in fighting old diseases that have re-emerged, such as cholera, dengue and tuberculosis, and in confronting new health challenges, particularly noncommunicable diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes, which are on the rise in all countries of the Americas.
- PAHO promotes primary health care strategies, to expand access to health services and increase their efficiency and quality. PAHO also promotes universal health coverage, human rights and nondiscrimination, multiculturalism, gender equality, and social participation in the protection and promotion of health. PAHO focuses special efforts on population groups and diseases that have traditionally been neglected or marginalized.
- PAHO works closely with ministries of health and other government agencies as well as professional associations, academic institutions, and faith-based, community, and civil society organizations.
- PAHO also works with, and carries out programs and projects for, other United Nations agencies, international organizations such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, official development cooperation agencies of various governments, and for philanthropic foundations.
- PAHO has 35 Member States in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. PAHO also has four Associate Members (Puerto Rico, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten), three Participating States (France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom), and two Observer States (Portugal and Spain).
- PAHO's priorities and policies are set by its Member States through its Governing Bodies, including the PAHO Directing Council, which meets yearly, and the Pan American Sanitary Conference, which meets every fifth year. PAHO receives funding through quota contributions from its Member States, allocations from WHO, and voluntary contributions from governments, international organizations, and private and public sector organizations.
- As Regional Office for the Americas of WHO, PAHO is a member of the United Nations System. It also serves as the specialized health agency of the Inter-American System, whose other members are the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.



- Other major regional public health achievements to which PAHO has contributed include:
 - Vaccination Week in the Americas, which celebrated its 10th year in 2012 and inspired the first World Immunization Week, also in 2012.
 - The ratification by 29 of 35 countries in the Americas of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).
 - In Latin America and the Caribbean, the highest rates of coverage with antiretroviral treatment for people with HIV of any middle-lower-income region.
 - In Latin America and the Caribbean, the lowest infant mortality rates of any developing region.
 - Substantial reductions in the impact of neglected diseases such as leprosy, Chagas disease, and onchocerciasis (river blindness).

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