

## **Regional Workshop The Economic, Fiscal and Welfare Implications of Chronic Diseases in the Americas<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, D.C., 23 - 24 November, 2009

Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)  
525 Twenty Third Street, N.W. – Room 1017  
Washington, D.C. 20037

### **Activity Brief**

#### **Workshop Objectives:**

The objective of the Workshop is to present and discuss analytical frameworks and empirical studies on the economic, fiscal and welfare implications of aging and chronic diseases in countries of the Americas. The emphasis will be on the following conditions: cancers, cardio-vascular diseases, diabetes and obesity, and chronic respiratory diseases. These conditions account for a large proportion of the overall burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in countries of the region.

The Workshop discussions will help our institutions to identify research gaps on the types of analytical and empirical studies needed to build support for a broader public policy approach. Focus will be geared towards identifying the type of research and dissemination of information activities needed to gather support of senior policy makers from the Ministries of Economic Development, Planning, Finance or Central Banks, on public policies needed to prevent or reduce the social and economic costs to families and the society brought by the avoidable burden of chronic diseases.

Researchers from international organizations and from countries of the Region will present and discuss papers analyzing different dimensions of the economic, fiscal and welfare implications of chronic diseases: i) the direct and indirect costs at the household, national health care systems and

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<sup>1</sup> This is an activity organized by the Public Policies, Regulation and Health Financing Project of the Area of Health Systems and Services (HSS/RF) and the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases Project of the Area of Health Surveillance, Diseases Prevention and Control (HSD/NC), with the cooperation of the Area of Gender Ethnicity and Health (GEH) of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

macroeconomic levels; ii) the catastrophic nature of health expenditures associated with chronic diseases; iii) the fiscal implications of the cost increases to be faced by public health care systems; and iv) the gender implications of chronic diseases related to un-remunerated long-term care services provided by households. A special emphasis will be given to the fiscal and macroeconomic implications of an increased burden of chronic diseases and their impact on the rate of economic growth.

### **Background:**

Worldwide the social and economic burdens of NCDs have been increasing substantially in the last two decades. The countries of the Americas are not an exception to this global trend. More than 60% of deaths in the Americas are due to chronic disease and this proportion is expected to continue to increase during the next decades (WHO 2005, 2008).<sup>2</sup> The shared risk factors are: unhealthy diet and physical inactivity (overweight and obesity affect 30-70% of adults); tobacco use (8-45% adults); and extended harmful use of alcohol. Currently, chronic diseases -namely heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes and obesity- and their complications -renal failure, stroke, blindness and amputations-, are the most costly health problems facing governments, communities, and families throughout the Americas. In the USA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that ¾ of health care spending is on preventable chronic disease conditions (CDC, 2009).<sup>3</sup> Globally, the problem of chronic diseases and obesity is concentrating more and more in poor families and it is emerging in children, threatening past public health gains. The good news is that most of it can be prevented through: concerted government public policies in the economic and social sectors; policies and actions by communities and private corporations; and induced optimal decisions by families and individuals.

### **Expected Outcomes:**

Increase awareness of the economic, fiscal and welfare implications of a raising burden of chronic diseases in countries of the Americas. To receive recommendations from the participants on the type of analytical and empirical research and advocacy activities to advance, among senior economic advisors and policy makers of the region, an agenda for the prevention of chronic diseases. An Activity Report summarizing the presentation, discussions and recommendations of the Workshop will be produced.

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<sup>2</sup> WHO, [2008-2013 Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases](#)

WHO, Global Report 2005. [Preventing Chronic Diseases: A Vital Investment.](#)

<sup>3</sup> CDC, [Chronic Disease Overview.](#)

**Participants:**

Policy advisors and researchers from international organizations, from national academic and research institutions, and Directors of Health Economic Units or Departments of Health Economic (UES/DES) of Ministries of Health of the Region.

**Venue:**

Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)  
525 Twenty Third Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20037 - Room 1017

**Language:**

English and Spanish, simultaneous translation

**Hotel Accommodation:**

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