



# RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS AND SERVICES IN EMERGENCY AND DISASTER SITUATIONS

**From Policy to Practice**

**PAHO**

Pan American  
Health  
Organization

World Health  
Organization  
Pan American  
Americas



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## Background and Purpose of the Webinar

Over the past 20 years, national health systems around the world have faced challenges and crises that have directly affected their ability to respond to their population's needs. During this period, one out of four disasters has occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), resulting in 289,055 deaths and impacting nearly 277 million people, with estimated losses of over US\$ 1.27 trillion<sup>1</sup>.

The Region of the Americas is a region at risk. More than half of its total land area is exposed to natural phenomena that pose potential threats to essential infrastructure and the health of the population. About 36% of the hemisphere's surface is exposed to floods, 9% to hurricanes, 5% to earthquakes, 5% to volcanic activity, and 2% to landslides.

Overall, 88% of the Region's hospitals are exposed to hazards of natural origin—floods being the most recurrent, followed by hurricanes, landslides, earthquakes and volcanic activity, with 43% of these facilities located in areas at high risk of exposure<sup>2</sup>.

Substantially reducing the damage to health facilities and the interruption of their services calls for strengthening the resilience of national health systems and integrating emergency and disaster risk management in all levels of care.

This effort must rely on capacity building of human resources for health to enable them to better understand and implement approaches for risk reduction, the continued implementation of the International Health Regulations, as well as the intensification of cooperation between health authorities and other sectors<sup>3</sup>.

Health systems and infrastructures must prepare and strengthen themselves to better respond to, assimilate, and recover as quickly as possible from the impact of different types of events, including those derived from biological threats and the effects of climate change, in order to guarantee continued access to health services, especially for the most vulnerable population groups.

The capacity of health infrastructures to withstand adverse events is critical to protect individuals' lives and investment and guarantee the continuity of essential health services to affected communities. Health facilities and networks must learn to quickly expand or adapt their capacities during and after an adverse event, considering at all times the specific needs of population groups disproportionately affected by disasters, such as persons with disabilities, indigenous populations, women, children, and elderlies, among others, to ensure that no one is left behind.

<sup>1</sup>EM-DAT, CRED/UCLouvain, Brussels, Belgium. (D. GUHA-SAPIT). Consulted 15 April 2021. Available from: [www.EMDAT.be](http://www.EMDAT.be)

<sup>2</sup>PAHO. Hospital Exposure to Natural Hazards in the Region of the Americas.2022.

<sup>3</sup>United Nations. (2015). Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291\\_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf)

## Webinar **Objective and Structure**

### **Objective**

The objective of this webinar is to highlight lessons and best practices related to health emergency preparedness and risk reduction efforts as well as learn from past emergency response experiences in the Region, starting with the current COVID-19 pandemic that has further exposed the vulnerabilities of national health systems and services. We will present and discuss how to best incorporate these lessons to promote the development of resilient health systems and services in the Americas.

With this in mind, the webinar will focus on sharing global and regional successful experiences and strategies to advance emergency and disaster risk reduction as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation; promote inclusive, multi-hazard approach to health disaster risk management, and foster the expansion of medical care delivery capacity through Emergency Medical Teams (EMT).

### **Structure**

This two-hour webinar will be hosted via Zoom, with simultaneous interpretation into English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and international sign language.

The event will be organized in two parts:

**An Institutional Session** with thematic presentations from PAHO and WHO experts looking at key priorities and global and regional perspectives on resilience building in health.

**A High-level Panel** in a roundtable format. This session will facilitate experience sharing from various stakeholders of the Region of the Americas around meaningful preparedness and response efforts implemented at country level.

A chatroom will be open for the audience to submit questions at the time of registration and throughout the event.

## Agenda

Time	Topic	Presenter
11:00 - 11:10 am	<b>Opening Remarks</b>	<b>Dr. Ciro Ugarte</b> Director Health Emergencies PAHO/WHO
11:10 - 11:50 am	<b>Key messages and global and regional perspectives</b>	
	<b>Resilient Health Systems</b> (10 min)	<b>Dr. Amalia Del Riego</b> Unit Chief, Health Services and Access PAHO/WHO
	<b>Risk management and resilient of health services</b> (10 min)	<b>Dr. Qudsia Huda</b> Unit Head, Disaster Risk Management and Resilience WHO Health Emergencies Program (TBC)
	<b>Resilient Hospitals: Design, implementation, and evaluation.</b> (10 min)	<b>Dr. Awad Mataria</b> Director, Universal Health Coverage/Health Systems WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) TBC
	<b>The WHO-EMRO experience on Resilient Health Services</b> (10 min)	<b>Dr. Dalia Samhour</b> Program Area Manager, Country Health Emergency Preparedness & IHR WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO)
11:50 am - 12:40 pm	Round table <b>Resilient Hospitals: Integrated networks of safe, sustainable, and inclusive health services</b>	<b>Moderator: Dr. Alex Camacho</b> Advisor, Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction PAHO/WHO
	<b>Hospital safety</b> (10 min)	<b>Paola Pontoni</b> Department Head, Emergency and Disaster Risk Management, Ministry of Health of Chile

## Agenda

(Cont.)

Time	Topic	Presenter
<b>11:50 am - 12:40 pm</b>	Round table (Cont)	
	<b>Smart Hospitals</b> (10 min)	<b>Ms. Shalini Jagnarine</b> Consultant, Disaster Risk Reduction, PAHO/WHO Jamaica
	<b>Experiences in the deployment of emergency medical teams (EMTs)</b> (10 min)	<b>Mario Vilchez</b> Director, CAED Costa Rican Social Security Fund, Costa Rica
	<b>Implementation of the methodology for Disability Inclusion in Hospital Disaster Risk Management (INGRID-H)</b> (10 min)	<b>Dr. Virginia Herzig</b> Director, Risk Management Ministry of Health of Guatemala
<b>12:40 pm - 12:55</b>	<b>Questions and Answers (Q&amp;A)</b>	
<b>12:55 pm - 13:00 pm</b>	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	<b>Dr. Celso Bambarén</b> Unit Chief, Country Health Emergency Preparedness and IHR, PAHO/WHO

**Register**