



Alliance for
Primary Health Care
in the Americas

ALLIANCE FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN THE AMERICAS

Investing, Innovating and Implementing Primary
Health Care through Collective Action

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PAHO



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BACKGROUND

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) remains one of the most impacted regions globally by the COVID-19 pandemic. The region's pre-pandemic structural deficiencies in health, social and economic sectors exacerbated existing inequalities, profoundly impacting health systems, and severely disrupting access to essential health services. The pandemic has underscored the urgent need to position health at the highest level in global and regional political agendas, considering how it devastated lives and livelihoods throughout the region, particularly for the most vulnerable.

A growing consensus is emerging on the importance of strengthening the global architecture for health emergency preparedness and response. These complex deliberations recognize the centrality of health - and that of resilient health systems - based on primary health care (PHC) as foundational to ensure political, economic, and social stability.

COVID-19 exposed the interdependency between health, social protection, and the economy within society. With the stark realization that pandemics represent a major global systemic macroeconomic risk, strengthening health systems based on PHC is now seen as a priority not only for the health sector, but also for all other sectors. This has given new impetus to expand dialogue between Finance and Health Ministries to jointly assess and address structural deficiencies in health and social protection sectors.

The post-pandemic debate is focused substantially on ensuring a post-COVID development era that prioritizes, builds, and embeds resilience within societies and health systems, advancing health systems reforms, recuperating lost public health gains and, importantly, in protecting societies from multifaceted threats and risks - biological, natural, or economic in nature.

These transformational changes need to occur in a volatile regional economic and fiscal environment, presenting challenges for countries' recovery efforts. Still a window of opportunity is at hand to firmly position health within the wider socioeconomic recovery and development agenda, and to implement key policies and strategies with other sectors that will improve health outcomes and contribute to greater resiliency of the LAC countries. Opportunity exists to accelerate and scale innovation in health service delivery, and strengthen the capacity, effectiveness, and efficiency of health systems based on PHC, while advancing on disease prevention, control, and elimination goals.

LOOKING FORWARD

Countries with sustained political commitment and financing for PHC have steadily progressed in addressing the needs of people in communities where they live, whereas those that have not prioritized this approach report important inequities in health outcomes, and inefficiencies in the operations and management of health systems.

A comprehensive, territorial-based approach that renews and expands PHC, supported by high-performing public health functions and the accelerated adoption of innovations developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, provides a roadmap for recovery and advancement in health in the LAC countries.

In addition, the PHC approach is essential if LAC is to address inequities in access to health, and challenges arising from the demographic and epidemiological transition, namely an ageing population, and increasing prevalence of long-term, chronic non-communicable diseases. Expanding PHC scales capacity in early detection and notification of disease outbreak within communities, constituting the first wall of defense and response in such situations.

Investment in PHC is an investment in the resiliency of health systems and the economy, improving the level of preparedness of the LAC countries in the face of future public health emergencies and threats, while paving the way towards sustainable, equitable and inclusive health and development for all.



THE ALLIANCE FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN THE AMERICAS (A4PHC)

It is within this context that the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) intend to collaborate under the Alliance for Primary Health Care (A4PHC) initiative, to promote coordinated action aiming to guide and shape investments in health, leverage innovation, and accelerate the transformation of country health systems based on the PHC approach. Under the initiative, the three organizations intend to collaborate in engaging countries in the assessment of the performance of their health systems, in policy dialogues and in the collaboration with those countries for the development of their investments plans with the aim to support the expansion and development of resilient health systems, based on the foundation of PHC.

The collaboration aims to increase, improve and make more efficient health investments, leveraging innovation and supporting country implementation, enabling collaboration amongst countries in health systems strengthening based on PHC.

PAHO, IADB and the WB may, in particular, explore the possibility of coordinated action in LAC in the following areas, consistent with their respective organizational mandates:

- Cooperate in supporting the development and expansion of country health systems based on the PHC approach, building resilience within the health sector, and promoting the principles of universal access to health and universal health coverage.
- Collaborate on the alignment of policy and operational frameworks to strengthen country health systems based on the PHC approach.
- Collaborate on acceleration of the implementation of innovative approaches and actions in PHC.
- Foster coordination and coherence between the organizations, and among regional PHC initiatives to avoid fragmentation, aiming at addressing equity and effectiveness priorities.
- Cooperate in leveraging financing and action from countries, regional and global partners, and the private sector as appropriate, promoting increased coordination in financing for health to strengthen and expand PHC.
- Cooperate in accelerating joint actions to scale availability and quality of the regional health workforce.

MODALITIES

To advance the objectives of the A4PHC, PAHO, IADB and the WB may agree to cooperate jointly through coordinated actions at the regional and country level, and in coordination with national health authorities.

The A4PHC aims to identify additional partners that bring expertise, knowledge, capacity, and resources to increase the response capacity of the A4PHC and the achievement of its objectives.

PAHO, IADB and the WB will continue to work directly with countries in LAC in accordance with their institutional mandates, and collectively through the A4PHC in support of national public health objectives.

The A4PHC aims to facilitate joint policy dialogue at the country level, and support key activities, including but not limited to:

- Collaborate with the intent of having short- and medium-term action plans for A4PHC.
- Cooperate in the establishment of criteria for engagement with countries, linking with country offices of the three organizations when applicable.
- Promote policy dialogue mechanisms for the analysis of national needs and investments plans, which may lead to joint supportive action.
- Consider alternatives to leverage joint technical and planning instruments for country support.
- Explore opportunities to leverage and expand the work of existing arrangements that promote dialogue between Ministries of Finance and Health.
- Evaluate ways to increase and coordinate financing for health in countries, with the intent of generating increased financing for PHC.

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