

54th DIRECTING COUNCIL

67th SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF WHO FOR THE AMERICAS

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RESOLUTION

CD54.R7

PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF VIRAL HEPATITIS

THE 54th DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Having examined the *Plan of Action for the Prevention and Control of Viral Hepatitis* for 2016-2019 (Document CD54/13, Rev. 1);

Considering that the World Health Organization has provided an overarching framework to address the challenge of viral hepatitis at the global level;

Considering Resolutions WHA63.18 (2010) and WHA67.6 (2014), the Call to Action to Scale up Global Hepatitis Response, and other documents published with a focus on advocacy and awareness, knowledge and evidence, prevention of transmission, screening, care, and treatment;

Considering the Strategy and Plan of Action for Integrated Child Health (Resolution CSP28.R20 [2012]), and the concept paper on Health and Human Rights (Resolution CD50.R8 [2010]);

Acknowledging the impact of viral hepatitis on morbidity and mortality in the Region of the Americas, especially among key populations and vulnerable groups;

Recognizing that disease and death caused by or associated with viral hepatitis imposes a substantial social and financial burden on the countries of the Region;

Recognizing that viral hepatitis accentuates inequities in coverage of health services by affecting key populations;

Acknowledging that interventions conducted early in life may drastically change the pattern of chronic hepatitis B in the Region;

Acknowledging that hepatitis B is a risk for the health care workforce in the Region;

Acknowledging that access to curative treatments for hepatitis C can be a reality through concerted efforts in the Region;

Considering that elimination of hepatitis B and C is possible in the foreseeable future,

RESOLVES:

1. To urge Member States, taking into account their national context and priorities, to:
 - a) prioritize viral hepatitis as a public health issue, promoting an integrated comprehensive response and establishing specific targets to face the challenges entailed by this infectious disease;
 - b) foster interprogrammatic synergies and activities within and outside of the health system, engaging all relevant partners and stakeholders, including civil society, in the response to viral hepatitis;
 - c) optimize the efficient use of existing resources and mobilize additional funds to prevent and control viral hepatitis;
 - d) strengthen and develop strategies for awareness campaigns to commemorate World Hepatitis Day with the goal of increasing access to prevention, diagnosis, care, and treatment services;
 - e) maintain or expand hepatitis B virus vaccine coverage in children less than 1 year of age and adopt the policy of vaccination of newborns during the first 24 hours after birth;
 - f) review vaccination policies and support their implementation to expand coverage of available vaccines among members of key populations and vulnerable groups;
 - g) establish specific strategies for prevention of transmission of hepatitis B and C in key populations and vulnerable groups, including outreach and educational interventions as well as promotion of treatment, rehabilitation, and related support services that take into account national context and priorities to reduce the negative health and social consequences of illicit drug use;
 - h) support strategies for preventing transmission of hepatitis B and C within and outside of health care settings;
 - i) support the development of health-related policies, regulations, norms, and capacities at the country level for screening, diagnosis, care, and treatment of viral hepatitis (according to evidence-based normative guidance developed by WHO) and ensure their implementation;

- j) promote inclusion of diagnostics, equipment, and medicines related to viral hepatitis in national essential medicine lists and formularies, and promote their access through price negotiation processes and national and regional procurement mechanisms such as PAHO's Regional Revolving Fund for Strategic Public Health Supplies;
 - k) strengthen countries' capacity to generate and disseminate timely and quality strategic information on viral hepatitis, disaggregated by age, sex, and ethnic group;
 - l) strengthen national policies, guidance, and practices related to blood safety and vaccination programs;
 - m) eliminate gender, geographical, economic, sociocultural, legal, and organizational barriers that prevent universal equitable access to comprehensive health services, following the PAHO Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage.
2. To request the Director to:
- a) maintain an interprogrammatic task force on viral hepatitis that can establish a permanent dialogue with Member States;
 - b) support the implementation of the Plan of Action, especially with respect to strengthening services for screening, diagnosis, care, and treatment of viral hepatitis as part of the expansion of universal health coverage in the Region of the Americas;
 - c) provide technical assistance to Member States to increase the evidence base of viral hepatitis-related prevention, care, and treatment and for the implementation of the measures proposed in this Plan of Action, in keeping with national priorities;
 - d) support Member States to increase access to affordable viral hepatitis commodities, including through price negotiation processes and other mechanisms for sustainable procurement;
 - e) continue documenting the feasibility of elimination of viral hepatitis B and C in the Region, including setting targets and milestones towards the WHO 2030 elimination goals;
 - f) continue to prioritize the prevention of viral hepatitis, with an emphasis on immunization programs for hepatitis B in infants and key populations and on access to life-saving hepatitis C drugs, considering the foreseeable goal of elimination of hepatitis B and C in the Americas;
 - g) promote strategic partnerships and technical cooperation among countries in carrying out the activities included in this Plan of Action.

(Sixth meeting, 30 September 2015)