

WELCOME TO OUR
**Bi-Monthly
Newsletter**



We're off to a Strong Start!

Welcome to the second issue of AMR Readiness and Response!

The year has started with strong momentum. Across the region, teams have been engaging in presentations, trainings, workshops, and laboratory equipment upgrades – all part of the ongoing effort to strengthen microbiology systems and improve how we detect and respond to AMR.

With support from the UK Fleming Fund, the project continues to connect laboratory professionals, clinicians, and public health partners into a growing regional community of practice working to protect Caribbean communities.

In this issue, we feature reflections from Dr. Elton Burnett, nominee of the Caribbean AMR Leadership Award. Happy reading!

PAHO AMR TEAM

In this newsletter:

- Building Knowledge Together
- Spotlight on Barbados' Best-dos Santos Public Health Laboratory
- Q&A with Dr Elton Burnett

This newsletter brings together stories and updates from Fleming Fund – supported projects working to build stronger, more resilient Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) surveillance systems across the Caribbean.



Building Knowledge Together: Strengthening a Caribbean Community of Practice

The Caribbean AMR team has had a busy start to the year, engaging with partners across the region to share knowledge, strengthen collaboration, and highlight progress under the UK Fleming Fund–supported project, Strengthening AMR Response in the Caribbean.

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PAHO Launches First ReLAVRA+ Training of 2026 to Strengthen AMR Surveillance in the Region

PAHO held the first ReLAVRA+ webinar of 2026, bringing together countries across the Region to strengthen how AMR is measured, understood, and addressed.

The Latin American and Caribbean Network for Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance (ReLAVRA+) training is focused on helping national surveillance teams better analyse laboratory data and generate clear indicators that show how resistant bacteria are and the gravity of the problem for public health.

Strengthening how we analyse and interpret AMR data is essential for understanding the true burden of antimicrobial resistance in our countries,” said Dr Marcelo Galas, Technical Officer for Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance, AMR Special Program at PAHO/WHO.

“Robust surveillance is not only about generating data, it is about generating insight/information,” Dr Galas said.

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Equipment Delivery Update

Strengthening laboratory systems remains a key part of the UK Fleming Fund–supported project. Over the past year, PAHO has supported the delivery and installation of critical laboratory equipment to enhance diagnostic capacity across the region.

In total, 34 pieces of equipment have been delivered to 14 laboratories in 9 Caribbean countries, providing

laboratory teams with the tools needed to better detect and monitor antimicrobial-resistant organisms. These installations include advanced diagnostic platforms such as VITEK® 2, BACT/ALERT®, MALDI-TOF ...

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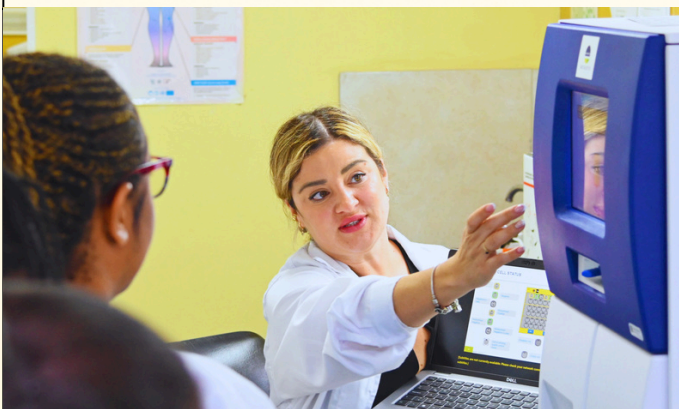


Strengthening Barbados' Fight Against Antimicrobial Resistance

At the Best-dos Santos Public Health Laboratory in Barbados, laboratory technologists play a vital but often unseen role in protecting public health. By identifying disease-causing organisms and determining which antibiotics will work, the team provides information that guides treatment, supports infection prevention, and strengthens national preparedness. For them, the motivation is simple: reliable laboratory results save lives and help prevent the misuse of antibiotics that drives AMR.

Before support from the Fleming Fund–supported programme, the laboratory faced challenges common across the region - ageing infrastructure, inconsistent access to reagents, gaps in standardised surveillance, and limited data integration.

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My role in the fight against AMR is:

My role may be small, but it's an important one. For the past 12 years, I have focused on basic and applied research, studying why bacteria develop resistance to antibiotics and identifying ways to combat the problem. I am also fortunate to work with a large poultry integrator – the Jamaica Broilers Group, which adopted a “no antibiotics ever” programme five years ago. This initiative allows us to explore how large-scale changes in agricultural practices influences antibiotic resistance potential in important bacteria at the molecular level.

Dr Elton Burnett is a Microbiologist and the Health Services and Research & Development Manager in the Poultry Division of the Jamaica Broilers Group of Companies. He was nominated for the 2025 Caribbean AMR Leadership Award in honour of Dr Suzan McLennon Miguel.


One thing I wish everyone in the Caribbean understood about AMR is:

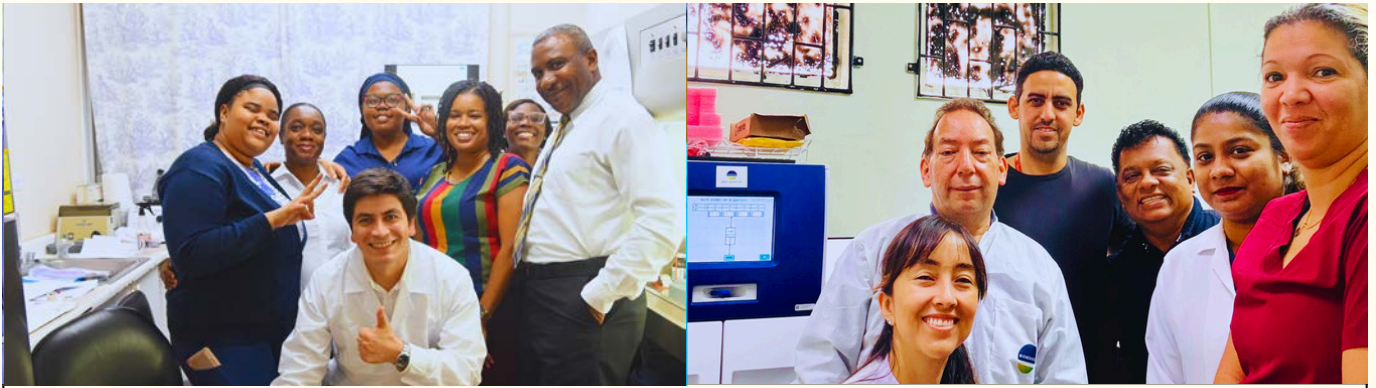
In regions like ours, the full scope of challenges posed by antibiotic resistance is not well understood. I think we sometimes fail to realise how interconnected we are – how antibiotic overuse in agriculture can directly impact human health in a negative way. I really wish people across our Caribbean community understood that our actions in human health, animal health, and the environment are closely linked. Recognising these connections is really the heart of the One Health approach to addressing AMR.

A moment in my career that reminded me why this work matters was:

One moment that stands out was when the Jamaica Broilers Group transitioned to a “no antibiotics ever” approach in poultry production. Since then, we have been tracking and analysing microbes to determine the impact of removing antibiotics on the genomic evolution and antibiotic resistance profiles of bacteria. Early indications are promising and exciting. Being involved in this project in our sub-region makes me proud and shows how important it is for the Caribbean to embrace science and innovation in tackling AMR.

DR ELTON





Building Stronger Foundations for AMR Surveillance in Haiti and the Dominican Republic

Every day, laboratories quietly generate information that shapes how infections are treated and how health systems respond. When that information is clear, consistent, and well understood, it becomes a powerful tool in the fight against AMR – a growing challenge that makes once-treatable infections harder to cure.

In January 2026, PAHO brought together laboratory professionals and

public health teams from Haiti and the Dominican Republic for a shared learning experience: a virtual workshop focused on the standardised use of the WHONET program.

Over two days, participants logged in to learn new software skills and strengthen a common approach to how AMR data is recorded, understood, and used.

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Building on Momentum: Caribbean Training on LIMS and New Technologies for AMR

Laboratory professionals from across the Caribbean are coming together in Barbados for a regional workshop focused on strengthening AMR surveillance and diagnostic capacity.

From April 8–10, 2026, the Caribbean Training Workshop on Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) and New Technologies for

AMR Characterization is being held at the Best-dos-Santos Public Health Laboratory in Bridgetown, Barbados. The workshop is being organised by the PAHO/WHO Special Program on Antimicrobial Resistance, in collaboration with CARPHA, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and national partners.

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