BETTER CARE FOR NCDs IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Better Care for NCDs in Guatemala

Guatemala is strengthening primary health care to provide integrated prevention, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up for people with noncommunicable diseases.



26%
of municipalities implementing HEARTS in 9 departments and 11 DDRISS, as of December 2026.

46%
additional municipalities in the planning stage.

3
clinical pathways established: hypertension, type 2 diabetes and chronic kidney disease.

01 THE NCD CHALLENGE

- NCDs are a major threat to Guatemala: seven of the ten leading causes of death are linked to these diseases.
- One in three adults lives with hypertension and nearly one in five with diabetes.
- Geographic, economic, cultural and linguistic barriers hinder access and continuity of care.
- Strengthening integrated and effective primary health care is essential to prevent complications, disability, treatment discontinuation and avoidable premature deaths.

02 STRENGTHENING NCD CARE

- In 2026, Guatemala reaffirms its political commitment by joining the Better Care for NCDs initiative, with support from regional missions.
- HEARTS initially reached 2.44 million adults, with 157 additional municipalities in the planning stage.
- Clinical pathways for hypertension and diabetes are in place, strengthening capacities, clinical follow-up, data use and local monitoring.
- Medicines and technologies for hypertension, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, cancer and human papillomavirus (HPV) testing were added to the PAHO Strategic Fund.

Acronyms: PHC, primary health care · DDRISS, Departmental Directorates of Integrated Health Service Networks · NCDs, noncommunicable diseases · MSPAS, Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance.

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PAHO/WHO GUATEMALA · 2026

03 FROM HEARTS TO BETTER CARE

HEARTS is the entry point for comprehensive NCD care in Guatemala, strengthening capacities, clinical pathways and continuity of care through primary health care.

- Implementation of the Comprehensive and Inclusive Care Model.
- Stronger policies and financing through the Comprehensive Cancer Care Law.
- Interprogrammatic and intersectoral coordination to promote healthy environments, physical activity and tobacco control.



Interprogrammatic mission on Better Care for NCDs in PHC. Guatemala, May 2026.

VIDEO NCDs GTM

KEY MESSAGE

> *Addressing NCDs includes prevention, early detection, timely treatment, follow-up and continuity of care. The next step is to consolidate, institutionalize and scale it up.*

Dr. Joaquín Barnoya
Minister of Public Health and Social Assistance.

04 RESULTS IN HEALTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITIES

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New medicines
Added by MSPAS to its procurement list through the Strategic Fund for hypertension, diabetes, chronic kidney disease and cancer.

600+

Community network participants gained knowledge of healthy habits, nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and cancer and tobacco use prevention.

500+

Health workers trained in cardiovascular, renal and metabolic risk and quality improvement; 29 health directorates briefed on Better Care for NCDs.

05 CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

Challenges: Overcome service fragmentation, strengthen coordination and local capacities, expand comprehensive NCD care and ensure sustainable processes within health networks.

Next steps:

1. Strengthen national and local coordination to align priorities and responsibilities and expand NCD actions across territories.
2. Assess gaps in priority areas and develop operational plans to improve NCD care using available local resources.
3. Expand clinical pathways based on epidemiological priorities and service capacities.
4. Implement strengthening and expansion plans to deliver comprehensive, sustainable and locally relevant services.