PANAMA PAHO/WHO COUNTRY COOPERATION STRATEGY 2023-2028



INTRODUCTION

The WHO Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) is the medium-term strategic framework for WHO's collaboration with a Member State, in support of the country's National Health Development Policy, Strategy, and Plan. The WHO-Panama Country Cooperation Strategy (2023-2028), was developed through extensive consultations with the Ministry of Health, other health-related line ministries, the UNCT, the private sector, legislators, development partners, civil society etc., to objectively identify factors hindering effective health service delivery and recommend solutions.

The five strategic priorities of the PAHO/WHO-Panama CCS (2023-2028) are based on PAHO/WHO's comparative advantage and are aligned with Panama's Health Sector Strategic Plan (2019-2025), National Strategic Plan (2020-2024), the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2030, PAHO's Strategic Plan (2020-2025), the Agenda for Sustainable Health for the Americas (2018-2030) and WHO's General Programme of Work (GPW).

ABOUT US

The PAHO/WHO Country Office in Panama was established in 1951. As of 2024, the office currently has 32 staff. Of these, two are CPCP staff. It belongs to CPCP typology B.

In the past biennium (2022-2023) the total funding received by the country office was US$ 6,103 million and the utilization rate was 100%.

PARTNERSHIP ENVIRONMENT

PAHO/WHO collaborates actively with a range of humanitarian and development partners, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), aid organizations, bilateral cooperation agencies and the UN system regional offices based in Panama.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Panama has 10 provinces and 6 "comarcas" since 2020. It has a population of 4,5 million (2023), with about 56,7% of its population being aged between 15 and 64 years old. Panama is a high/middle-income country with an economy based on services. As of 2024, its GDP per capita was US$19,369. The domestic general government health expenditure per capita PPP 8 in current international $) has increased from 1,456,3 in 2018 to 1,715,91 in 2021 according to the World bank. The Ministry of Health and the "Caja del Seguro Social" (Social Security) are responsible for the health service provision, alongside a growing private sector.

PROGRESS ON HEALTH OUTCOMES

The country had made progress in health outcomes. Life expectancy has increased from 76,2 years in 2000 to 77,2 years in 2021. NCDs are prevalent in the country (namely hypertension, diabetes and obesity). The main causes of death are malignant tumors, ischemic heart disease and cerebrovascular diseases. The level of maternal, morality is 49,5 per 100K live births in 2020. However, the country is free from poliomyelitis (1994), congenital Rubella (2015), neonatal tetanus (2016), Rubella (2015), yellow fever epidemics, and cholera. Routine immunization coverage increased from 72% in 1980 to 88% in 2023 for DPT 1st dose, while malaria prevalence has increased around 60% from 2021 to 2023. In addition, there has been an increase in cases of people living with TB (37 per 100K pop. in 2022), 0,35 new HIV infections per 100 uninfected pop. in 2023 and an increase in syphilis cases.

KEY CHALLENGES

Some key health challenges in the country include the unification of the health system, limited access to quality, focus on PHC to reduce NCD preventable morbidity and mortality. Out-of-pocket expenditure remains high. Weak governance and accountability mechanisms undermine effective implementation of health policies and programs. Inadequate intra- and inter-sectoral collaboration for health, at all levels hinder results.

For more information visit the link: https://www.paho.org/es/panama

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & DELIVERABLES



01 Contribute to strengthening the National Health Authority to advance towards universal health access and coverage.

STRATEGIC DELIVERABLES

- Promote the strengthening of the leadership of the National Health Authority and governance of the health sector, as well as the Essential Public Health Functions, as a key element for progress towards universal health.
- Strengthen the effective regulation process of public health supplies, including medicines, medical devices, blood, blood derivatives, vaccines and other health technologies.
- Strengthen capacities for the management of human resources in health, harmonized with training entities in order to respond to the needs of the health system based on the care model.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased access to health-care quality services with particular focus on vulnerable populations
- Improved National Health Authority efficiency in the use of resources (human and financial)

02 Promote processes aimed at integrating the provision and equitable access to comprehensive, quality health services focused on all people and communities.

STRATEGIC DELIVERABLES

- Strengthen the provision of health services based on integrated health service networks with a life-course approach.
- Promote the development of the digital transformation process of the health system, to improve access to and coverage of health services.
- Promote actions to reduce inequalities in maternal and child health in populations in vulnerable conditions.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased integrated healthcare networks
- Enhanced use of digital technologies in health to facilitate access to services.

03 Expand and strengthen the comprehensive approach to reducing the burden of NCDs and mental health based on Primary Health Care.

STRATEGIC DELIVERABLES

- Strengthen and integrate surveillance systems for NCDs and their risk factors.
- Support the updating and creation of new legal and regulatory frameworks focused on reducing NCDs and accompany their implementation and monitoring.
- Promote the promotion, prevention and management of non-communicable diseases, based on the epidemiological profile and the best available evidence.
- Strengthen mental health services based on Primary Health Care.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased routine detection of NCDs risk factors at PHC level
- Strengthened timely management of NCDs

04 Promote intersectoral work to reduce the impact of communicable diseases on public health

STRATEGIC DELIVERABLES

- Strengthen the communicable disease surveillance system for decision-making and timely response from an intersectoral and participatory perspective.
- Support the updating and creation of new legal and regulatory frameworks for the comprehensive approach to communicable diseases and accompany their implementation and monitoring.
- Promote the protection of achievements that contribute to the control of vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Promote compliance with the Disease Elimination Initiative.
- Strengthen prevention, preparedness and response to epidemics and pandemics within the framework of the IHR.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Improved infectious disease indicators at national level
- Strengthened access to point-of-care treatment particularly to vulnerable populations

05 Strengthen national and subnational capacities for comprehensive risk management related to events of importance to public health

STRATEGIC DELIVERABLES

- Strengthen coordination for response to emergencies and disasters.
- Strengthen capacities for comprehensive risk management in the face of health emergencies.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Strengthened capacity to respond to emergencies

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