

Concept Note and Agenda

The Region of the Americas has made progress in recognizing primary health care (PHC) as the cornerstone of health systems transformation. However, a critical gap persists between policy and implementation: countries have regulatory frameworks and strategic guidance in place, but face challenges in translating them into institutional capacities, aligned financing, territorial organization of services, and concrete results for people and communities.

For the first time, this meeting brings together three regional technical networks—RedFESP (Essential Public Health Functions Network), REFSA (Network of National Health Funds of the Americas), and Impulsa-RISS (Network to Advance Integrated Health Services Networks)—in a joint space with a systemic and integrated approach. The central premise is that PHC can only be consolidated when governance provides an enabling environment, financing aligns incentives, and service delivery operates through integrated networks across territories.

The meeting seeks to consolidate a regional platform for dialogue, applied learning, and collaborative planning to accelerate PHC-based transformation, connect experiences across countries, translate evidence and technical knowledge into practical tools, and generate regional public goods with high value for technical cooperation.

Overall Objective: Strengthen coordination among governance, financing, and integrated service delivery by bringing together RedFESP, REFSA, and Impulsa-RISS in a joint space for exchange, applied learning, and collaboration to accelerate effective implementation of PHC in countries of the Region

Key Objectives

- Accelerate the transformation of health systems toward PHC through collaborative work among the three networks.
- Strengthen institutional and territorial capacities to implement PHC policies, promoting greater coordination and integration with specialized care services.
- Identify and scale up technical cooperation strategies, tools, and products with potential for regional replication.
- Promote cross-network priorities for the 2026–2027 biennium.

Event Methodology: The meeting will combine plenary sessions, technical panels, country experiences, and network-specific working sessions, with an emphasis on exchange and joint development. The event will be livestreamed to facilitate broader participation. The meeting will conclude with a joint plenary session to define priorities and next steps.

Countries: Bolivia (RedFESP, Impulsa-RISS); Belize (RedFESP); Brazil (REFSA, Impulsa-RISS); Chile (RedFESP, Impulsa-RISS, REFSA); Colombia (REFSA, RedFESP); Costa Rica (RedFESP); Cuba (Impulsa-RISS, RedFESP); El Salvador (RedFESP, REFSA, Impulsa-RISS); Mexico (REFSA, Impulsa-RISS); Panama (RedFESP); Paraguay (Impulsa-RISS, RedFESP); Peru (REFSA, RedFESP, Impulsa-RISS); Dominican Republic (RedFESP, Impulsa-RISS); Uruguay (REFSA, RedFESP, Impulsa-RISS), Venezuela.

Other participants: National Council of Municipal Health Secretariats of Brazil (CONASEMS); National Council of State Health Secretaries of Brazil (CONASS); World Health Organization (WHO); World Bank; and Inter-American Development Bank.

Day 1 – Wednesday, September 2

Time	Session	Objective / Content	Speakers
08:30-09:00	Participant registration		
09:00-09:30	Official opening	Welcome by the host country and PAHO/HSS. Opening remarks on the purpose of the joint meeting and the value of linking the three networks as a regional platform to accelerate effective PHC implementation.	- Adriano Massuda, Executive Secretary, Ministry of Health of Brazil - Cristian Morales Fuhrmann, PAHO/WHO Representative in Brazil - Marcela Tatiana Flores Zambrana, Minister of Health, Ministry of Health of Bolivia - Hisham Mohamad Hamida, President of CONASEMS, Brazil - Jurandi Frutuoso, Executive Secretary, CONASS, Brazil - James Fitzgerald, Director, Health Systems and Services, PAHO [virtual]
09:30–10:30	Comprehensive PHC: aligning governance, financing, and integrated service delivery. Network presentations - RedFESP presentation - REFSA presentation - Impulsa-RISS presentation	Presentation of the purpose, work plan, and progress of the three networks: why comprehensive PHC requires integrated work across governance/EPHFs, financing, and IHSNDS; and how the three networks are evolving as “technical communities” that connect territories, capacities, and agendas.	Leadership of RedFESP, REFSA, and Impulsa-RISS: - Iritzel Santamaría, National Deputy Director of Health Planning, Ministry of Health, Panama - Darcio Guedes Junior, Director, National Health Fund (FNS), Brazil - Marcela Cuadrado, State Health Services Administration (ASSE), Uruguay Moderator: Ernesto Bascolo, Unit Chief, Primary Health Care and Integrated Service Delivery, PAHO
10:30–11:00	Brazilian Health System – integrated model	Plenary presentation	Adriano Massuda, Executive Secretary, Ministry of Health of Brazil Moderator: Camilo Cid, PAHO Brazil

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11:00- 13:00	REFSA Plenary: Launch of the Study on Contracting Private Providers for Specialized Health Services	Presentations by the study technical team on its purpose and progress. Experiences from countries participating in the study: importance of the study and discussion on strategic purchasing and public-private relationships.	• Laura DiGiorgio, World Bank (virtual participation) • Ernesto Bascolo, Unit Chief, Primary Health Care and Integrated Service Delivery, PAHO • Study technical team: Daniel Titelman, World Bank, and David Debrott, HSS, PAHO. Representatives from REFSA countries Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, and Chile: • Darcio Guedes Junior, National Health Fund (FNS), Brazil • Chantal Boulay, MSP, Uruguay • Jorge Sanchez, Secretariat of Health, Mexico • Carolina Salazar Hernández, FONASA, Chile Moderator: David Debrott, HSS, PAHO
13:00-14:00	Lunch	Informal exchange.	
14:00-15:00	Governance for decentralization and integration of health networks: subnational experiences	Presentation of experiences with decentralization models and the organization of health service networks at the subnational level.	• Camilo Cid, PAHO Brazil • André Luís Bonifácio de Carvalho, Director of the Department of Interfederative and Participatory Management (DGIP), Ministry of Health of Brazil • Roberta Fonseca Sampaio, Executive Coordinator, SESAB/BA, Brazil • Alejandro Svarch, IMSS-Bienestar, Mexico Moderator: Cristian Morales Fuhrmann, PAHO/WHO Representative in Brazil
15:00-15:15	Coffee break		
15:15-17:00	Parallel sessions by network	Each network will work on concrete priorities and products for 2026–2027: <u>REFSA: 1)</u> Study on contracting private providers – validate information and share methodological details; 2) Network work plan. <i>Moderator: David Debrott, HSS, PAHO</i> <u>Impulsa-RISS: 1)</u> Progress and challenges of the Technical Groups; 2) Priorities and opportunities for cooperation; 3) Action agenda and next steps. <i>Moderator: Gustavo Rosell, PH-HSS, PAHO</i>	RedFESP, REFSA, Impulsa-RISS

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		RedFESP: 1) Study on the institutionalization of the EPHFs; 2) 2026–2027 work plan; 3) Implementation of action plans. <i>Moderator: Natalia Houghton, OPS</i>	
Evening	Social activity/working dinner	Networking opportunity.	PAHO Brazil

Day 2 – Thursday, September 3

Time	Session	Objective / Content	Speakers
09:00-11:00	RedFESP Plenary Session: Strengthening Institutional Capacities through Assessment and Continuous Improvement of the EPHFs	Present preliminary results of the RedFESP regional study: lessons from national experiences with institutionalization in the Americas. Examine how countries are translating the EPHF framework into sustainable institutional arrangements to strengthen stewardship and governance.	- Presentation: Natalia Houghton, HSS, PAHO Country experiences: - Marcela Tatiana Flores Zambrana, Minister of Health, Ministry of Health of Bolivia - Juan Carlos Esquivel Sánchez, Vice Minister of Health, Ministry of Health, Costa Rica - Iritzel Santamaría, National Deputy Director of Health Planning, Ministry of Health, Panama - Tomiris Myrteiline Valerio Rosario; Head of the Strategic Management Department, Ministry of Public Health, Dominican Republic Moderator: Joel Caraballo, PAHO Bolivia
11:00-12:30	Governance arrangements for the EPHFs: country experiences and lessons for strengthening stewardship and governance	Exchange on governance arrangements that enable the implementation, coordination, and institutionalization of the EPHFs, highlighting the roles of ministries/secretariats of health, public health institutes, subnational authorities, and intersectoral mechanisms.	Presentation: Sohel Saikat, Principal Senior Advisor on PHC & Health Systems Resilience and EPHF Lead, WHO - Country Experiences Panel: - Jacques Girard, Laval University, Canada - Marcelo Setaro Montes de Oca, Strategic Planning Area Manager, Uruguay - Xaviera Molina, Advisor to the Office of the Undersecretary of Public Health, Chile - Rita Catanelli, Technical Advisor, CONASS, Brazil - Marleannis Fernández Cobas, Director for PHC Functions, Ministry of Public Health, Cuba

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			Moderator: Carina Vance, PAHO Chile
12:30-13:30	Lunch	Informal exchange.	
13:30-14:15	Digital Health	Digitalization as an agenda to accelerate and integrate health financing, governance, and health service networks.	• Presentation: Marcelo D'Agostino, EIH, PAHO • Francisco Ochoa, Inter-American Development Bank Moderator: Ernesto Bascolo, Unit Chief, Primary Health Care and Integrated Service Delivery, PAHO
14:15-15:15	Country experiences – Innovative use of technologies for health systems transformation	Country presentations and moderated discussion	• Eduardo Gonçalves, Technical Advisor, CONASEMS, Brazil • Carlos Alvarenga, Vice Minister of Health Management and Development, El Salvador Moderator: Camilo Cid, PAHO, Brazil Commentary: Julio Pedroza, PAHO, El Salvador
15:15-15:30	Coffee break		
15:30-16:30	Plenary on planning, resource allocation, and strategic purchasing.	• Presentation and moderated discussion	• Eduardo Kaplan, Director of Health Economics and Investment, Ministry of Health of Brazil • Alejandro Svarch, IMSS-Bienestar, Mexico • Carolina Salazar Hernández, FONASA, Chile Moderator: Ernesto Bascolo, Unit Chief, Primary Health Care and Integrated Service Delivery, PAHO
16:30–17:00	Plenary session – Agreements from the networks' parallel sessions	• Summary of the agreements reached by each network	• Delegate from each network (7 minutes each) Moderator: Ernesto Bascolo, Unit Chief, Primary Health Care and Integrated Service Delivery, PAHO

Day 3 – Friday, September 4

Time	Session	Objective / Content	Speakers
09:00-10:00	Plenary: From conceptual updating to operationalizing IHSDNs.	Brief presentation of the updated conceptual and operational framework for IHSDNs, emphasizing territory and population, organization of the model of care,	Presentation of the IHSDN operational framework: Gustavo Rosell – Regional Advisor, Integrated Health Services, PAHO. Country experiences:

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		integration and continuity, and governance.	• Marcela Cuadrado, Vice President, State Health Services Administration (ASSE), Uruguay • Luisa Yudelka Batista Reyes, Vice Minister of Strengthening and Development, Ministry of Health, Dominican Republic • Marcelo Hugo Gallareta Tarqui, Ministry of Health of Bolivia Moderator: Wilson Benia, PAHO Uruguay
10:00-11:00	Technical panel: IHSDNs in action – challenges to improving access, integration, and continuity of care	Experiences addressing concrete challenges in network operations: territorial management, waiting lists and wait times, continuity of care, and integration of specialized networks with PHC.	Country panel: • Tatiane da Silva Corrêa Filipak, Municipal Secretary of Health of Curitiba, Brazil • Mirian Ribeiro Conceição – Coordinator of Hospital Planning and Programming, Brazil • Gustavo Ortiz – Director General of Health Services and Network Development, MSPBS, Paraguay [virtual] • Marcelo Setaro – Strategic Planning Manager, MINSAL, Uruguay • Ileana Morales Suárez – Director of Science and Technology, MSP, Cuba Moderator: Pedro López, PAHO Dominican Republic
11:00-12:30	Impulsa-RISS Plenary: Experiences and proposals to accelerate implementation of IHSDNs	Presentation of different territorial implementation pathways: models adapted to needs, priorities, and opportunities for cooperation.	Country presentations: • Nazarea Herrera Maldonado, IMSS-Bienestar, Mexico • Paulina Pinto, Head of the Primary Care Division, Chile • Maritza Perez – Director of Sectoral Steering, MSP, Dominican Republic • Laura Marina Rauda de Romero, Technical Officer, Directorate of Primary Level of Care, Ministry of Health, El Salvador • Dr. Ana Luisa Caldas, SAPS, Brazil Moderator: Claudia Pescetto, PAHO Peru
12:30-13:30	Lunch	Informal exchange.	

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13:30-15:00	From assessment to action: country experiences in strengthening PHC-based health systems.	General presentation and country experiences using tools to assess and strengthen PHC at the macro, meso, and micro levels.	Presentation: Natalia Houghton, HSS, PAHO Country experiences in applying EPHFs and IHSDNs: - Carlos Alvarenga, Vice Minister of Health Management and Development, El Salvador - José Ortellado, Vice Minister of Health Stewardship and Surveillance, Paraguay [virtual] - Luisa Yudelka Batista Reyes, Vice Minister of Strengthening and Development, Ministry of Health, Dominican Republic - Juan Eduardo Guerrero Espinel, Vice President, Colombian Association of Public Health (ACSP) Moderator: Alejandra Carrillo, PAHO Paraguay
15:00-15:30	Observatory on Health Policies, Systems and Innovation.	Present Brazil's experience in implementing an intelligence unit to drive progress and health system transformation.	Aline Costa, Director of the Department of Technical Cooperation, Innovation and Health Development (DECOOP) – Ministry of Health of Brazil Moderator: Camilo Cid, PAHO Brazil
15:30-15:45	Coffee break		
15:45-16:30	Three Networks, One Shared Agenda for Health Systems Transformation	Final reflections, shared vision of the three networks, next steps and expected outputs.	- Iritzel Santamaría, National Deputy Director of Health Planning, Ministry of Health, Panama - Darcio Guedes Junior, Director, National Health Fund (FNS), Brazil - Marcela Cuadrado, Vice President, State Health Services Administration (ASSE), Uruguay Moderator: Ernesto Bascolo, Unit Chief, Primary Health Care and Integrated Service Delivery, PAHO
16:30-17:00	Official closing	Final remarks and closing of the meeting.	- Adriano Massuda, Executive Secretary, Ministry of Health, Brazil - Cristian Morales Fuhrmann, PAHO/WHO Representative in Brazil - Ernesto Bascolo, Unit Chief, Primary Health Care and Integrated Service Delivery, PAHO