

PAHO



Pan American
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In honor of the observance of International Women's Day 2022

“Gender equality in health: using evidence, building resiliency and transforming health care toward sustainability”

Tuesday, 8 March 2022

In mid-2021, a global Generation Equality Forum concluded in Paris adopting a bold action oriented 5-year agenda with commitments and financial pledges. The plan emphasized accountability and participation as central elements and is catalyzed by 6 Coalitions which are chaired by champions, leaders, governments, philanthropies the UN and others. The Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights has defined part of its vision as including: the promotion of non-discriminatory labor markets, free from violence and harassment; a care economy that equitably shares and values care and domestic work; and resilience to economic shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the start of the pandemic, nearly 300 million people around the world have been infected with COVID-19. In the Americas, nearly 128.9 million cases have been reported up to the end of January 2022, and health systems continue to be challenged. The magnitude of the infections has been heavily driven by the Omicron variant. However, lower mortality is being observed as a result of increased vaccination coverage, which is helping to save lives. As new actions are being defined to move beyond the COVID-19 pandemic into recovery, we are reminded that numerous vulnerabilities and risks continue to persist within our populations, even though many of them are better understood today. National responses must vigorously target those most at risk, while ensuring full protections for essential health and other frontline workers.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined its commitment to the Generation Equality Forum as driving the change to end gender-based violence; to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights; and to support health workers as well as feminist movements and leadership. On the topic of gender equal health and care workforce, WHO will concretely advocate for decent and safe work conditions for all health care workers, especially women. This includes promoting civil society participation in health systems and in COVID-19 response and recovery activities. The foundation of these commitments rests on a strong element of data collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data.

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The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) also is and has been at the forefront in advocating for and contributing to initiatives to leave no one behind in health, especially women and girls in all their diversity. In honor of the observance of International Women’s Day 2022, PAHO will host a virtual event entitled: **Gender Equality in Health: using evidence, building resiliency and transforming health care toward sustainability.** This aligns closely with the Commission on the Status of Women’s (CSW) global theme- “Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programs.”

According to PAHO’s new report “**Gendered Health Analysis: COVID-19 in the Americas**”,¹ COVID-19 has had catastrophic effects on health systems (including health workers) and on the health of people in the Region of the Americas, especially women and girls, whose conditions have worsened in all respects. The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women, contributing to greater gender inequality in health, which threatens their development and well-being. Join the discussion on the findings of the report and the wider debate on data, resiliency, and transformation from a gender equality framework.

¹ Available at <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/55432>