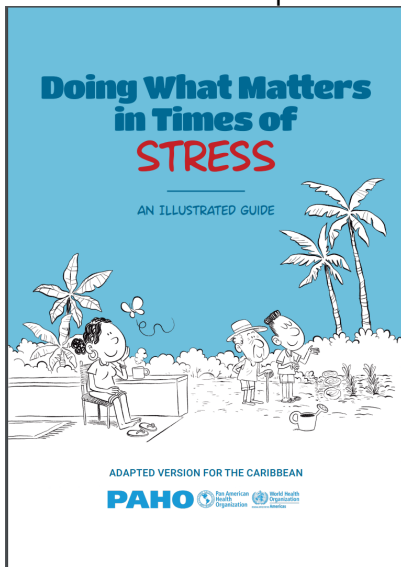


COVID-19

PAHO/WHO Response. 28 January 2022. Report n. 69

HIGHLIGHTS

The WHO's mental health management guide '**Doing what matters in times of stress**', has been adapted for the Caribbean as an illustrated guide and is now readily accessible to the Region. It features relatable and simple activities, designed to help people of all ages to cope with adversity and better manage stress. PAHO launched the guide on 14 January in collaboration with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), to answer the call to prioritize mental health service delivery. Mental health services form a key area of the region's COVID-19 response, particularly because of the many difficulties caused by the pandemic. These include mental pressures associated with job loss, restricted face-



to-face education, violence and illness. This guide is for all who experience stress, ranging from parents and other caregivers to health professionals working in difficult situations. Informed by available evidence and extensive field testing, the guide provides information and practical skills to help cope with adversity. The guide can be read at home, during break or rest periods at work, before going to sleep, or at any other time when people might have a few moments to concentrate on taking care of themselves.

The **WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE)** has updated its guidance for booster doses and vaccination in children in light of increasing vaccine supply and coverage, emerging evidence and the evolving epidemiological situation of COVID-19. The revised SAGE Roadmap for Prioritizing Uses of COVID-19 Vaccines, originally issued in October 2020, identifies four categories of priority-use groups, based on the risk of disease and social disruption, and taking into account vaccine equity and wider benefits to society. Changes in SAGE recommendations include, among others, the offer of booster (third) doses within 4-6 months after completion of the primary vaccination series and the recommendation for countries to consider the individual and population-level benefits of vaccinating children, especially due to additional benefits of minimising disruption to their education and therefore improving their overall well-being. The Advisory Group also recommends that countries that have achieved high vaccination coverage in high-risk populations prioritized the global sharing of COVID-19 vaccines before vaccinating healthy children and adolescents who are at the lowest risk of severe outcomes.

SITUATION NUMBERS IN THE AMERICAS

as of 28 January 2022 (15:00)

56

Countries and territories affected

133,629,145

Confirmed cases

2,495,358

Deaths

1,582,775,870

Vaccine doses administered

RESPONSE PILLARS



1. Coordination, Planning, Financing, and Monitoring



2. Risk Communication, Community Engagement & Infodemic Management



3. Surveillance, Epidemiological Investigation, Contact Tracing; Adjustment of Public Health/Social Measures



4. Points of Entry, International Travel & Transport; Mass Gatherings



5. Laboratories & Diagnostics



6. Infection Prevention & Control; Protection of the Health Care Workforce



7. Case Management, Clinical Operations, & Therapeutics



8. Operational Support & Logistics; Supply Chain



9. Strengthening Essential Health Services & Systems

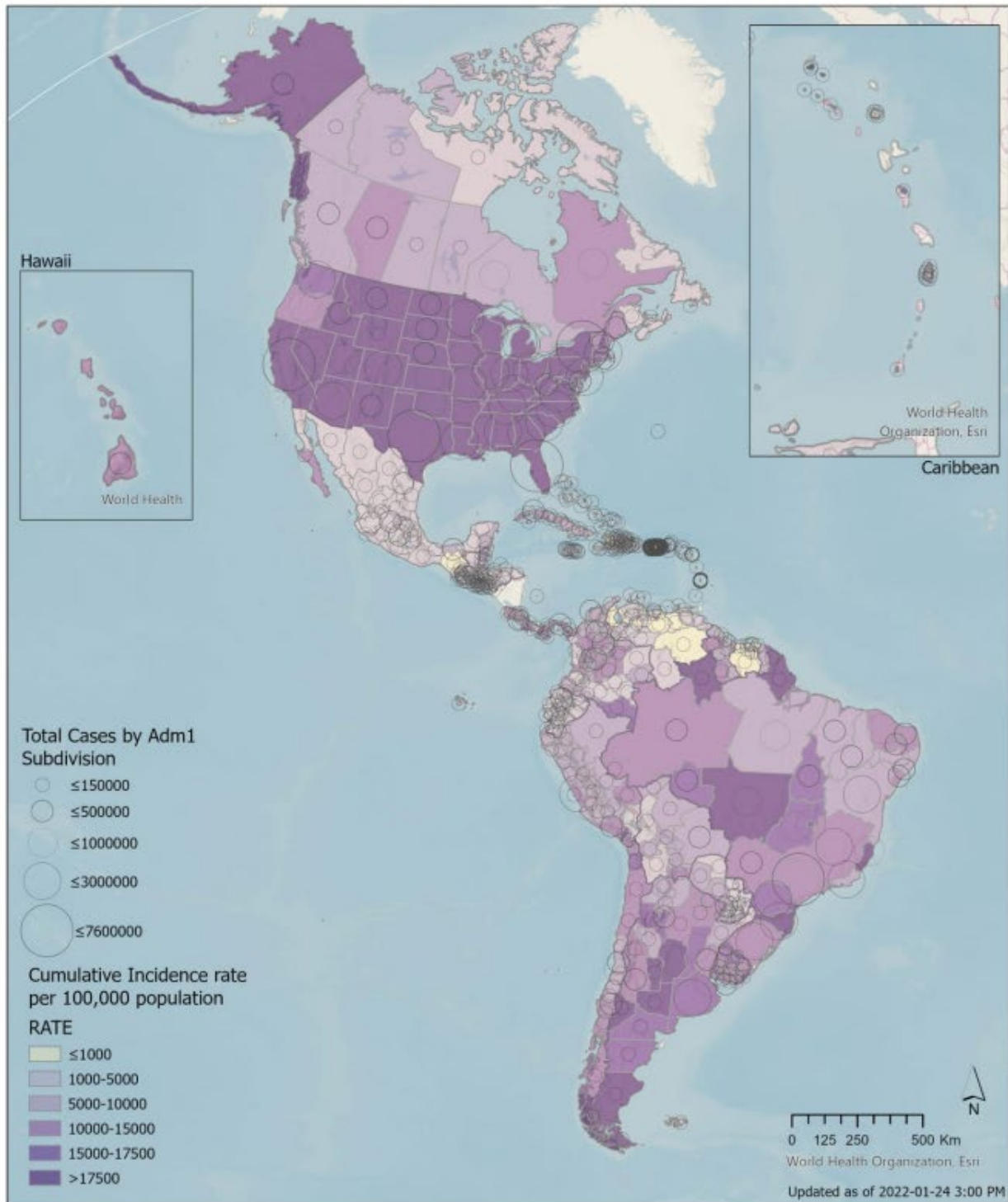


10. Vaccination

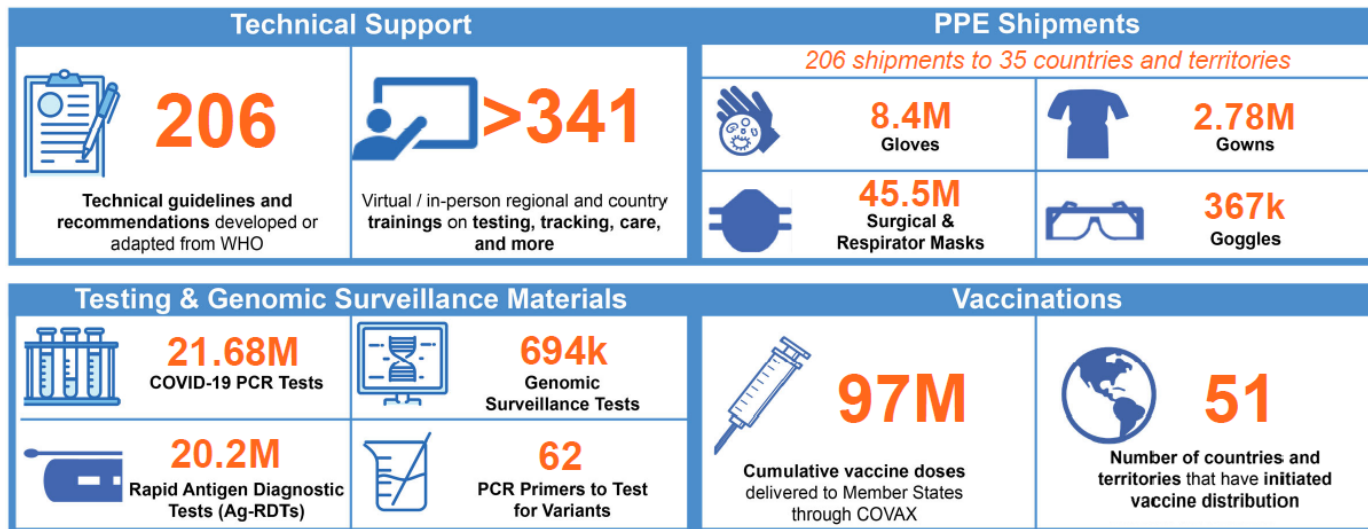
[Link to PAHO's technical and epidemiological reports, guidance, and recommendations](#)

[Link to global operational situation reports](#)

Map 1. Reported number of cumulative COVID-19 cases in the Region of the Americas and corresponding incidence rate (per 100,000 population) by country/territory. As of 24 January 2022



PAHO Regional Response Summary



Cumulative regional response data as of 28 January 2022.

PAHO/WHO Response (15 to 28 January 2022)

Following an outbreak of a novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China, rapid community, regional and international spread occurred with exponential growth in cases and deaths. On 30 January 2020, the Director-General (DG) of the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005). The first case in the Americas was confirmed in the USA on 20 January 2020, followed by Brazil on 26 February 2020. Since then, COVID-19 has spread to **all 56 countries and territories in the Americas**. On 17 January 2020, the Pan American Sanitary Bureau activated an organization-wide Incident Management Support Team (IMST) to provide its countries and territories with technical cooperation to address and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts align with the ten pillars of the 2021 WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19, PAHO's Response Strategy and Donor Appeal, and PAHO Resolution CD58.R9 approved by its Member States. Since then, the Organization has developed, published, and disseminated evidence-based technical documents to help guide countries' strategies and policies to manage this pandemic.



PILLAR 1: Coordination, Planning, Financing, and Monitoring

Support activation and operation of national public health emergency management mechanisms, as well as COVID-19 planning and response, based on a whole-of-government and inclusive whole-of-society approach

Regional

PAHO continued to collaborate with its partners within the Region and across the globe to deliver technical cooperation, evidence-based guidance and recommendations, and to advocate for the Americas on the global stage. PAHO's regional IMST also provided support and strategic guidance to country-level IMSTs as they coordinated and monitored their national response activities.

PAHO continued to review new and emerging information to build the evidence base to combat the virus. The public has access to PAHO's **COVID-19 Technical Database** for technical guidelines, scientific

publications, and ongoing research protocols from the Region. This is the result of partnerships with WHO, Cochrane, McMaster University, Epistemonikos, and others.

Country

In **Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Countries**, PAHO hosted a webinar on "**Ending the Acute Stage of the Pandemic in 2022: The State of COVID-19 response in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Countries**" on 26 January 2022. The purpose of the event was to discuss practical actions required to reduce the impacts of SARS-CoV-2 transmission on health as COVID-19 becomes another recurrent disease that health systems and societies will have to manage. The main objectives were to describe the evolving epidemiological profile after the Omicron wave and to understand the role of public health and social measures to control SARS-CoV-2 in the Eastern Caribbean Countries; to underscore practical ways of improving COVID-19 vaccination coverage and meet the global target by end of June 2022; to discuss the role of SARS-CoV-2 testing; present PAHO's contributions in COVID-19 response in Eastern Caribbean Countries and to review lessons learned, identifying gaps and challenges. The recording of the webinar is available on [PAHO TV YouTube Channel](#).

In **Chile**, on 18 January 2022, PAHO held a meeting with US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) representatives who were visiting the country. Topics discussed in the meeting include adverse effects of medicines, genomic surveillance for COVID-19 and Influenza, COVID-19 vaccine efficacy, border health, as well as the country's response to the pandemic. The meeting also aimed to identify opportunities for cooperation in existing projects.

In **Costa Rica**, **PAHO donated 20 laptops to the Ministry of Public Education (MEP)** with the purpose of reducing gaps identified during the COVID-19 pandemic in the access to technology devices for education. The donation, received on the week of 26 January 2022, is part of the technical cooperation PAHO has been providing to the country, and complements other initiatives regarding education in the context of the pandemic, such as support for the establishment of protocols for infection prevention and a study on barriers and facilitators for adherence to infection prevention measures in schools. The donation will improve access to a safe and healthy education environment by students from indigenous communities.



Figure 1: PAHO donates computers to support education activities in indigenous communities in Costa Rica. Source: PAHO.



PILLAR 2: Risk Communication, Community Engagement (RCCE)

Support participatory development and implementation of RCCE plans and dissemination of risk communication information to all populations and to travelers

COVID-19 Courses Available on PAHO's Virtual Campus for Public Health (SPA-POR)

Introduction to the COVID-19 Vaccine: **Guidance for Identifying Priority Groups and Developing Microplanning (SPA)**

COVID-19 Vaccination Training for Healthcare Personnel – 2021 (SPA, POR)

Vaccination for COVID-19: **technical protocols and procedures – Brazil 2021 (POR)**

Occupational Health and Safety for Healthcare Professionals in the Context of COVID-19 – 2020 (SPA, POR)

The full list of courses is available on the [PAHO website](#).

PAHO's Director Dr. Carissa F. Etienne delivered two press briefings during this period. On **19 January 2021**, the Director called on countries to prioritize rapid antigen tests for those with symptoms - who are most at risk of spreading the disease, since these tests "can be deployed to primary health centers, where they can reach more people closer to home." Still calling attention to the importance of testing, the Director highlighted PAHO's work to improve the region's laboratory capacity. The Organization now leads a network of more than 32 laboratories across the Americas, which enable countries to track the virus and detect new variants and which was key to detecting the arrival of Omicron in some countries, as well as helping governments to adapt their responses to this latest wave, she continued. PAHO has also established long-term agreements with two WHO-approved manufacturers of COVID-19 tests to secure these tools for the region at a fraction of their prices. The Director reinforced that countries should take advantage of agreements established by PAHO and purchase diagnostic tests through its Strategic Fund. Following on the COVID-19 situation in the Regions, Dr. Etienne mentioned a rapid increase in infections in all subregions, and insisted on the importance of vaccination to protect countries' health systems. "Vaccines shield us from the worst COVID symptoms and reduce our chances of needing hospitalized care," the PAHO Director said, calling for those who have not yet been vaccinated to do so as soon as possible. She added that over 60% of people in Latin America and the Caribbean are now fully vaccinated against COVID. "Slowing the spread of COVID will require every tool in our arsenal - vaccines, social distancing, mask wearing, avoiding large gatherings, and testing. We need to rely on all of these measures to continue to protect ourselves and each other against this virus," PAHO Director concluded.

During the press briefing of **26 January 2021**, the Director remarked that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in the Americas threatens the growth and development of children, who are missing out on routine vaccinations, putting countries at risk of losing two decades of immunization progress. The Director highlighted that during the week of the press release, countries reported the highest number of weekly cases since the pandemic began – more than 8 million, with deaths also increasing by 37% from the previous week. Dr. Etienne emphasized that, while most children recover well from the infection, they continue to miss out on their regular doctors' visits, and many remain out of the classroom, jeopardizing their social, mental, and physical wellbeing. PAHO's Director urged countries to continue routine immunizations, and called on Ministries of Health, Education, and Social Protection to work together "to bring as many of our children as possible back to school safely." While addressing the vaccination of children against COVID-19, Dr. Etienne highlighted that countries must "ensure that coverage among groups at highest risk of COVID-

19 disease and death is high” before they start vaccinating children. However, in countries where “vulnerable groups have already been protected and where additional vaccine supplies may be available, countries should consider the benefits of vaccinating children to further reduce the transmission of SARS-CoV-2,” said the Director. Dr. Etienne also called for countries to prioritize the collection of localized data on COVID-19. “Now more than ever, we need data about how this virus is affecting different ages, genders, groups, and geographies,” she said, adding that this will enable countries to identify gaps and target resources to those that need them the most. Turning to the COVID-19 situation in the region, in North America, the PAHO Director mentioned that cases in the United States had decreased by around one million over the previous week, but that many of Mexico’s southern states had seen new infections triple. Belize reported the highest rates of new infections in Central America, though infections are also accelerating in Honduras and Costa Rica. COVID-19 cases are also on the up in South America, with spikes in Argentina and Brazil, as well as high numbers of infections in Paraguay, the Guianas, Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. In the Caribbean, significant surges in infections were reported in Haiti and Martinique.

Regional

As the communication needs of the Region evolve, PAHO continues to disseminate key messages across multiple platforms and respond to numerous media inquiries. Communications support is provided to country offices on a variety of issues, particularly regarding COVID-19 vaccines and COVAX. **Infographics** cover a range of issues related to COVID-19, from steps on how to prevent infection to tips on staying healthy and protecting one’s mental health during the pandemic.



PILLAR 3. Surveillance, Epidemiological Investigation, Contact Tracing, and Adjustment of Public Health & Social Measures

Strengthen the capacity of surveillance systems to detect COVID-19 cases, while ensuring continued surveillance of other diseases epidemic and pandemic potential

Regional

PAHO developed a **Geo-Hub** for the Region which includes a series of dashboards and epidemiological data updated daily. It has four sub-regional and 56 country/territory geo-hubs for the Americas. In addition, PAHO's **interactive dashboard** provides information for the public on cumulative cases, deaths, cumulative incidence rate, new cases and deaths, as well as several other epidemiological indicators reported by countries and territories.

PAHO also publishes weekly reports detailing trends in influenza and other respiratory viruses, as well as SARS-CoV-2 surveillance indicators. PAHO continues to analyze trends in the Region, particularly through the collection of COVID-19 nominal data.

Seroprevalence studies have provided the Region with invaluable data on how the virus has spread since the onset of the pandemic. PAHO maintains a **dashboard that shows seroprevalence studies in Latin America and the Caribbean**, including information on the study design, sampling method, sample sizes, and other factors.



PAHO's Contact Tracing Knowledge Hub publishes multidisciplinary information on contact tracing for a variety of audiences, including policymakers, responders, researchers, educators, affected communities, and the public. Go.Data is one of the tools available through this platform. It is used to support case investigation and management, display transmission chains, and for contact tracing. In collaboration with GOARN, to date, PAHO/WHO has trained more than 35 countries and territories in the Go.Data app.



PILLAR 4. Points of Entry, International Travel, and Mass Gatherings

Support surveillance and risk communication activities at points of entry as well as implementation of appropriate public health measures

Regional

It is important that risk mitigation measures are always in place, including advice for travelers, particularly regarding the self-monitoring of signs and symptoms; surveillance and case management at the point of entry and across borders; capacities and procedures for international contact tracing; and environmental controls and public health and social measures at points of entry and onboard conveyances.

PAHO will continue to support countries to ensure that these capacities are in place. PAHO will also support countries' efforts to define a risk-based policy while resuming international traffic in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, considering the provisions of the International Health Regulations (IHR), available scientific evidence, and the most cost-effective use of available resources.

Country

In **Chile**, on 17 January 2022, PAHO participated in a meeting of the country's COVID-19 Advisory Committee. The meeting discussed challenges regarding testing, traceability, border surveillance and other measures in the context of the increased contagious due to the Omicron Variant of Concern (VOC). PAHO presented recommendations on the rational use of testing and suggestions on risk communication for the adjustment of the National Testing, Tracing, and Isolation Strategy, and of the country's Protected Borders Plan.



PILLAR 5: Laboratories and Diagnostics

Enhance laboratory capacity to detect COVID-19 cases as well as to manage large-scale testing for COVID-19 domestically or through arrangements with international reference laboratories

Regional

Since the beginning of PAHO's response to the date of this report, the Organization has provided primers, probes and/or PCR kits for over 21.68 million reactions/tests. To date, PAHO has provided over 706,700 swabs and 365 sampling kits, among other critical materials.

During the reporting period, PAHO continued to provide technical cooperation, including data review, troubleshooting sessions, and follow-up calls on laboratory diagnostics with Costa Rica, Guatemala and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

5.1 SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern

A number of SARS-CoV-2 variants have been identified through global genomic sequencing. Since the initial identification of SARS-CoV-2, until 28 January 2022, more than **7,624,544** complete genomic sequences have been shared globally through publicly accessible databases.

Given the significant resource requirements needed to sequence all samples in the Region to identify variants, PAHO continues to work closely with the laboratories of the countries of the Americas to help identify samples which should be prioritized for genomic sequencing. To date, PAHO has distributed **62 unique primers** to detect genetic variants using PCR.

To date, **27 countries** are participating in the **COVID-19 Genomic Surveillance Network**, with reference sequencing laboratories in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, the United States of America and Trinidad and Tobago visible on this **dashboard**. This mechanism will be critical to tracking the spread or appearance of new Variants of Concern (VOCs). During the reporting period, a total of 92 new SARS-CoV-2 full genome were sequenced and genomic sequencing data shared through the PAHO COVID-19 Genetic Surveillance Network (COVIGEN) Regional Sequencing Reference Laboratories for COVID-19 in support to countries using external sequencing capacity.

PILLAR 6: Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), and Protection of the Health Workforce

Support efforts to reduce human-to-human transmission within health facilities and the community, including through development and implementation of national IPC plans

Regional

Implementation of national IPC plans are key to reducing COVID-19 transmission at both community and health facility levels. PAHO supports countries by procuring PPE through donations, the Revolving Fund, and training healthcare personnel.

Country

In **Suriname**, on the week of 14 January 2022, **PAHO delivered 450,000 face masks that will be distributed by the Ministry of Health** to various healthcare institutions in the country. The items will be used to strengthen infection prevention in hospitals as well as in testing and vaccination sites. The donation is part of technical cooperation provided by PAHO to the country in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figure 2: Official handover ceremony of donation of surgical face masks to Suriname. Source: PAHO.



PILLAR 7: Case Management, Clinical Operations, and Therapeutics

Improve local health system capacity and protect healthcare workers to safely deliver equitable healthcare services

7.1 Therapeutics and Clinical Management

Considering the breadth of knowledge and evidence related to COVID-19, PAHO maintains an **interactive infographic** to help external partners navigate PAHO and WHO's technical material and compilations of evidence from the Americas and around the globe.

The Organization worked with countries in the Region to promote the **WHO Global COVID-19 Clinical Data Platform** for the clinical characterization and management of hospitalized patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. This is part of a global strategy to gain a clearer understanding of the severity, clinical features, and prognostic factors of COVID-19. The Platform has more than 400,000 cases with contributions from the following countries: **Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and the United States of America.**

PAHO last updated evidence for the **Ongoing Living Update of Potential COVID-19 Therapeutics: Summary of rapid systematic reviews on 26 January 2022**. The study synthesizes evidence on 175 therapeutics from 529 randomized controlled trials and observational studies.

7.2 Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs)

Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) are invaluable when demands on a country's health system exceed regular capacity. Updated information on deployed EMTs and alternative medical care sites (AMCS) throughout the Americas remained available at **PAHO's COVID-19 EMT Response information hub**. As of 28 January 2022, there were at least 100 EMTs deployed throughout the Region, and 129 Alternative Medical Care Sites, such as military bases, sports stadiums, and fairgrounds managed by PAHO. These EMTs have added 6,899 inpatient hospital beds and 1,078 critical care beds throughout the Region.



PILLAR 8: Operational Support and Logistics (OSL), and Supply Chain

Establish and implement expedited procedures to facilitate the Organization's support to countries and territories response to COVID-19 healthcare services

Regional

The regional team continued to collaborate with regional, national, and international partners (including other UN agencies) on all matters related to procurement, shipping, freight, logistics and technical specifications for PPE, oxygen concentrators, in vitro diagnostic products (IVDs), and other goods, supplies, and equipment critical to the COVID-19 response in the Americas.

Considering the multitude of suppliers and concerns about the quality of procured goods, PAHO has made quality assurance a critical component of its technical support in the procurement of goods, supplies and equipment for COVID-19 response. This involves reviewing technical specifications, ensuring correct shipping documentation for customs clearance, and supporting countries with quality assurance issues. WHO issued adapted interim guidance on the rational use of PPE for COVID-19 as well as considerations during severe shortages.

Country

In **Belize**, on 20 January 2022, **PAHO donated three defibrillators to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital Authority (KHMHA)**. The donation included 55 defibrillation pads, four reusable probes for adults, four reusable pediatric probes, three battery chargers and a carrying case for the devices. The defibrillators will contribute to support the strengthening of COVID-19 case management in the country, especially for persons experiencing cardiac problems or with underlying cardiovascular disease. Additionally, the country has received **460,000 masks to be distributed to 22 ministries and organizations**, and **test kits for a total of 1,725 tests**. The donations are results of PAHO cooperation agreements with different partners and will support national response to COVID-19, by increasing PPE supplies and the timely and accurate detection of the virus.



Figures 3, 4 and 5: PAHO delivers donations of material, equipment and PPE to strengthen COVID-19 response in Belize. Source: PAHO.

In **Jamaica**, **PAHO delivered COVID-19 response equipment and supplies** valued at J\$43,800,000 to the Ministry of Health and Wellness on 18 January 2021. The Organization handed over almost half a million non-sterile surgical masks for health care workers island wide. Medical equipment included 300 long-range vaccine carriers, two ultra-low temperature vaccine freezers and two vital signs monitors to establish observation areas at vaccination sites. Other items included laptops, printers and promotional materials to support the COVID-19 communications and vaccination efforts so as to bolster Jamaica's health response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figure 6: Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, Minister of Health and Wellness receives equipment and supplies to bolster COVID-19 response in Jamaica. Source: PAHO.

In **Suriname**, **PAHO donated 230 oxygen cylinders to the Ministry of Health** in support of case management for the COVID-19 response. Received on 25 January 2022, these cylinders were procured and shipped through the technical cooperation with PAHO and will be distributed to various medical institutions in Suriname by the Ministry of Health.

8.1 PAHO Revolving Fund for Essential Medicines and Strategic Public Health Supplies

Established in 2000, the PAHO Strategic Fund (SF) supports Member States by ensuring the quality, safety, and efficacy of medicines and other health products; improving demand planning and capacity-strengthening for supply chain systems; sustainably reducing prices of critical medications and supplies through transparent international sourcing; and a line of credit option to facilitate Member State procurement.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the SF was rapidly mobilized to assess inventories across the Region and evaluate which medications had adequate safety stock and which needed to be prioritized, avoiding unnecessary expenses or late fees. The platform leveraged existing long-term agreements and relationships with suppliers to mitigate price inflation and better plan shipments/deliveries. The SF also coordinated alternative modes of transport (e.g., air freight versus ocean freight) to adapt to the most cost-effective and timely methods amidst continuously evolving COVID-19-related disruptions. This required direct negotiations with suppliers to absorb increases in freight costs on medicines. Finally, the SF worked with partners to support effective alternative treatment protocols to help adapt to limited supplies during COVID-19.

Since the start of the pandemic to 28 January 2022, the SF has procured more than **\$291 million** worth of COVID-19 diagnostic tests (PCR and rapid tests), PPE and medicines for critical care, supporting more than **38 million people** throughout the Region of the Americas.¹ The Fund continues to support the procurement of medicines and public health supplies for individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, diabetes, neglected tropical diseases, cardiovascular diseases, and hepatitis C. Learn more about the PAHO Strategic Fund's essential work on the PAHO website.

¹ Sum of all Strategic Fund purchase orders placed to date. Occasionally, countries will withdraw or cancel orders, causing the figure to fluctuate from one report to the next.



PILLAR 9: Strengthening Essential Health Services and Systems

Support continued operation of equitable health systems based on Primary Health Care, to protect and sustain public health gains, investing in improved response capacity in the first level of care and the health service delivery networks, including the implementation of gender and culturally sensitive actions using human rights-based approaches, to overcome barriers to access, especially in populations in conditions of vulnerability.

Regional

PAHO provides continuous assistance to its Member States on **regulatory preparedness** to expedite processes for vaccine deployment. As part of the COVAX Facility's allocation mechanism, support includes presenting information on technical documents required by Member States during bilateral and regional meetings.

Health technology assessments (HTAs) are invaluable guidance for health authorities in the use of technologies relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 28 January 2022, there were **341 COVID-19 related reports available** in the [Regional Database of HTA Reports of the Americas \(BRISA\)](#).

The Organization collaborates with national regulatory authorities from across the Americas to share recommendations, considerations, and evaluations on products used to support COVID-19 patients and prevent transmission during the pandemic. Additionally, PAHO maintains a repository of websites and relevant information, including regulatory response on COVID-19, at the [Regional Platform on Access and Innovation for Health Technologies \(PRAIS\)](#).

Country

In **Mexico**, on 20 January 2022 PAHO held a meeting with the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) to follow-up on the capacity building activities of the HEARTS initiative on high blood pressure detection and control, provision of care to acute myocardial infarction and support to other noncommunicable diseases. The initiative aims to strengthen primary health care in the country as a means to improve COVID-19 response. PAHO is providing technical support to the training of 5,900 nurses and data sharing for monitoring of the project. Additionally, on 20 and 21 January 2022, PAHO participated in a meeting with the team responsible for the aging care program of the National Center of Preventive Programs and Diseases Control (CENAPRECE) of Mexico. PAHO has been providing technical support to review activities included in the program. The meeting aimed to identify priority actions for cooperation in 2022 that will continue to promote the comprehensive and sustained care of older persons, and measures to prevent COVID-19 infection in this population. Key issues addressed include risk communication and the strengthening of Integrated Health Services Networks.



PILLAR 10: Vaccination

Support the introduction, deployment, and evaluation of COVID-19 vaccines, ensuring their timely and equitable access, and strengthening vaccine safety surveillance.

Regional

As of 28 January 2022, more than **1,582,775,870 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines** had been administered in the Americas, with more than **653 million people having completed their full vaccination**

schedule. All **51 countries and territories in the Region** have begun vaccination, 33 of these having received vaccine doses through COVAX. Overall, PAHO has **distributed more than 97,008,240 million doses** to the Americas through COVAX. Additionally, PAHO continued to provide strategic direction to countries in the Region that are pending arrival of vaccines. More details are available on [PAHO's COVID-19 Vaccination in the Americas database](#), which reports on doses administered by country.

Successfully deploying vaccines for COVID-19 requires that countries have detailed plans which factor in considerations ranging from regulatory and logistical issues to staff needs, to ensuring equitable distribution, while targeting those most at risk of infection (e.g., frontline health workers, older persons, and those with underlying conditions).

PAHO is supporting countries throughout this process. **33 countries** have completed their **national deployment and vaccination plans (NDVPs)**. **35 countries** have completed the Vaccine Introduction Readiness tool (VIRAT), which includes a dashboard that provides an overview of regional readiness. Regional support also includes work with countries interested in gaining access to vaccines through the COVAX Facility.

PAHO provides technical cooperation to countries seeking to access the COVID-19 vaccine through the COVAX Facility, including those selected for Advance Market Commitment (AMC) funding to cover their doses. This includes sharing recommendations with national authorities on steps to ensure that their NDVPs meet the necessary criteria to roll out vaccines to priority populations.

In addition to written guidance, PAHO also provides training webinars to its Member States. PAHO worked with Member States to develop workshops aimed at strengthening the Events Supposedly Attributable to Vaccination or Immunization (ESAVI) surveillance in the Region of the Americas. Access the full list of past and future training sessions for all member states on PAHO's website.

PAHO maintains a [public dashboard](#) that tracks the safety of various COVID-19 vaccines during and after clinical trials.

Country



Figure 7: Guyana receives Janssen vaccine doses shared through the COVAX Mechanism. Source: PAHO.

In **Guyana**, **PAHO facilitated the donation of 28,800 doses of the Janssen Ad26COV2.S vaccine** as part of the dose-sharing mechanism through the COVAX Mechanism Facility. Received in the week of 15 January 2022, the mechanism's purpose is to ensure the equitable distribution of vaccines against COVID-19 globally. This PAHO initiative aims at improving health and increasing COVID-19 protection in Latin America and Caribbean countries. The project supports vaccine delivery and immunization programs, and includes, among others, the provision of PAHO technical assistance to strengthen national regulatory processes, community engagement, and communication to support vaccination and surveillance.

In **Haiti**, during the week of 17 January 2022, PAHO held a virtual meeting with representatives from the health district of Borgne, in the North department, to discuss strategies to improve COVID-19 vaccination and

other activities to fight COVID-19 at the community level. A similar meeting took place in the Ouest department with representatives from five health districts. The main topic discussed was the possibility of integrating COVID-19 vaccines into routine vaccination activities.

On 24 January 2022, **Paraguay received additional 466,830 doses of Pfizer vaccines** against COVID-19 donated by PAHO through COVAX, to a total of 1,343,970 vaccines received by the country through the mechanism since the start of the pandemic.

In **Suriname**, **PAHO provided the Bureau of Public Health (BOG) with two vaccine refrigerators** to support the Expanded Program on Immunization. The donation was delivered on the week of 19 January 2022, and is complements the previous donation of a freezer, in December 2021. the two refrigerators have a capacity of 36.5 cubic feet and the freezer has a capacity of 20 cubic feet and will serve to store COVID-19 vaccines as well as vaccines used in the routine immunization program that need to be kept at specific controlled temperatures to ensure safety and quality.

On 17 January 2022, **Venezuela received the fifth shipment of a total of 3,100,800 doses of vaccines** produced by the Sinopharm laboratory, and which have been procured by PAHO's Revolving Fund. This is the last delivery of a total of 12,076,800 vaccines doses obtained through an agreement established with the COVAX Mechanism. These additional doses will support the country in the achievement of the national vaccination target.



Figures 8 and 9: Venezuela receives fifth shipment of Sinopharm vaccines through COVAX. Source: PAHO

Gaps and Challenges

GAPS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveillance systems: additional capacity-building and equipment for analysis. • Information systems: Data management systems are essential for case monitoring and contact tracing while protecting confidentiality. • Strategic planning and response: Countries need enough resources to implement national COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan and Risk Communication Plans. • Laboratory test kits and equipment: National laboratories need more extraction kits and other supplies to keep testing. • IPC supplies: PPEs and supplies (including for WASH) are urgently needed for isolation and quarantine wards. Healthcare workers are hesitant to work without PPE. • Health facility evaluations: Countries must undertake additional assessments to guide measures for infection prevention and control. • Resources for and access to populations in situations of vulnerability: PPE and other supplies are needed in these communities. Logistical challenges must be overcome to deliver these critical goods. • Risk communications: Key messages must be tailored to each country's context to resonate with intended audiences. • Subnational-level health workers: A surge in medical personnel is needed to ensure countries can serve their whole populations and obtain more epidemiological data as it becomes available. • Intensive care units: More ICUs will be needed to manage severe cases. • Migrant access to health services: Countries are assessing how to serve these populations and better manage outbreaks. • Private sector coordination: This is essential to ensure national protocols are followed. • Nutritional Guidance: This is vital to ensure families maintain nutritional health during and after the COVID-19 emergency. • Health Disaster Management Programs: Health Disaster Management Programs and surveillance were noted as priorities to enhance the COVID-19 and any other health emergency responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable Vaccine Distribution: The shortage of available vaccines limits the ability of the countries to protect their populations. • Competitive marketplace: Countries and organizations are competing for limited supplies due to global shortages of PPE and other items. • Border closures: This has seriously hampered the deployment of experts, shipment of samples for testing, and procurement of supplies and equipment for testing, case management, and infection prevention and control. It has also added additional pressure to countries undergoing complex political and socio-economic transitions. • Managing infections in healthcare settings: Healthcare workers rely on PPE and other supplies to avoid infection. Global shortages are contributing to increasing cases and frontline workers losing their lives. • Infected healthcare workers: Infected health workers who are sick or quarantined will strain health systems. • Test availability: Epidemiological monitoring requires more testing. Counterfeit tests are creating risks in resources lost and incorrect analyses. • Health workforce limitations: Insufficient human resources hamper countries' efforts to conduct contact tracing and manage patients in quarantine. • Risk Communication: The perception of risk is still low in some countries/territories and many people ignore government public health measures. • Telephone referral systems: Some countries are reporting overwhelming call volumes. • Logistics systems: Many countries are still unprepared to manage the distribution of supplies and equipment. • Continuity in other health services: The pandemic has diverted resources from other critical services for programs such as HIV, TB, and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). • Stigma: Countries must take steps to reduce stigma towards persons returning from abroad and others associated with a higher likelihood of infection. • Public Compliance of Public Health Protocols: Public reluctance to follow public health protocols has led to increased infection rates in many countries in the Americas. • Variants: New COVID-19 strains present a challenge to the control of the disease.

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Support PAHO's efforts to fight COVID-19 in the Americas

The Region of the Americas has the highest cumulative number of COVID-19 cases and deaths.

PAHO is working with health professionals on the frontlines of this fight.

Vaccines will help save lives and eventually halt the pandemic.

Support PAHO's Response at:
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