

COVID-19

PAHO/WHO Response. 6 May 2022. Report n. 75

HIGHLIGHTS

From 23 to 30 April 2022, PAHO, together with countries and territories of the Region of the Americas and partners, celebrated the 20th annual Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA) and the 11th World Immunization Week (WIW) under the call to action: "Are you fully vaccinated? Get all your shots." During the [launch event](#), PAHO Director Dr. Carissa F. Etienne called for immunization gaps to be closed for all vaccines, including COVID-19. According to the Director, in 2020, 2.7 million children in the Americas did not receive essential vaccines due to interruptions in health services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This represents a setback in almost three decades of vaccination progress and creates serious risk of reintroduction of diseases. More than 66% of people in Latin America and the Caribbean have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. However, Dr. Etienne warned, "There is still a long way to go to ensure that all populations at risk receive the doses that they need for protection." VWA is an opportunity to "dispel doubts and promote the benefits of vaccination," she added.



Figure 1: PAHO Director at the launch event of the 20th Vaccination Week in the Americas. Credit: PAHO.

On 6 May 2022, [PAHO launched the "High-level](#)

[Commission on Mental Health and COVID-19."](#) The commission will prepare guidelines and recommendations to reduce the impact of the pandemic on mental health in the Region. The commission's work will focus on five key areas: recovering from the pandemic and promoting mental health as a priority; the mental health needs of vulnerable populations; integrating mental health into universal health coverage; financing; and promoting prevention of mental health conditions. Dr. Etienne officially launched the commission and emphasized: "We must seize the opportunity afforded by the pandemic to address long-standing weaknesses in mental health services and strengthen them for the future. Now is the time to build better mental health in the Americas."

SITUATION NUMBERS IN THE AMERICAS

as of 6 May 2022 (15:00)

56

Countries, territories, and areas affected

153,793,149

Confirmed cases

2,731,455

Deaths

1,791,144,461

Vaccine doses administered

Geo-Hub COVID-19 Information System for the Region of the Americas

PAHO's COVID-19 Vaccination in the Americas Dashboard

PAHO's technical and epidemiological reports, guidance, and recommendations

PAHO thanks our generous donors who have been helping us save lives and reduce the impact of COVID-19 in the Region.

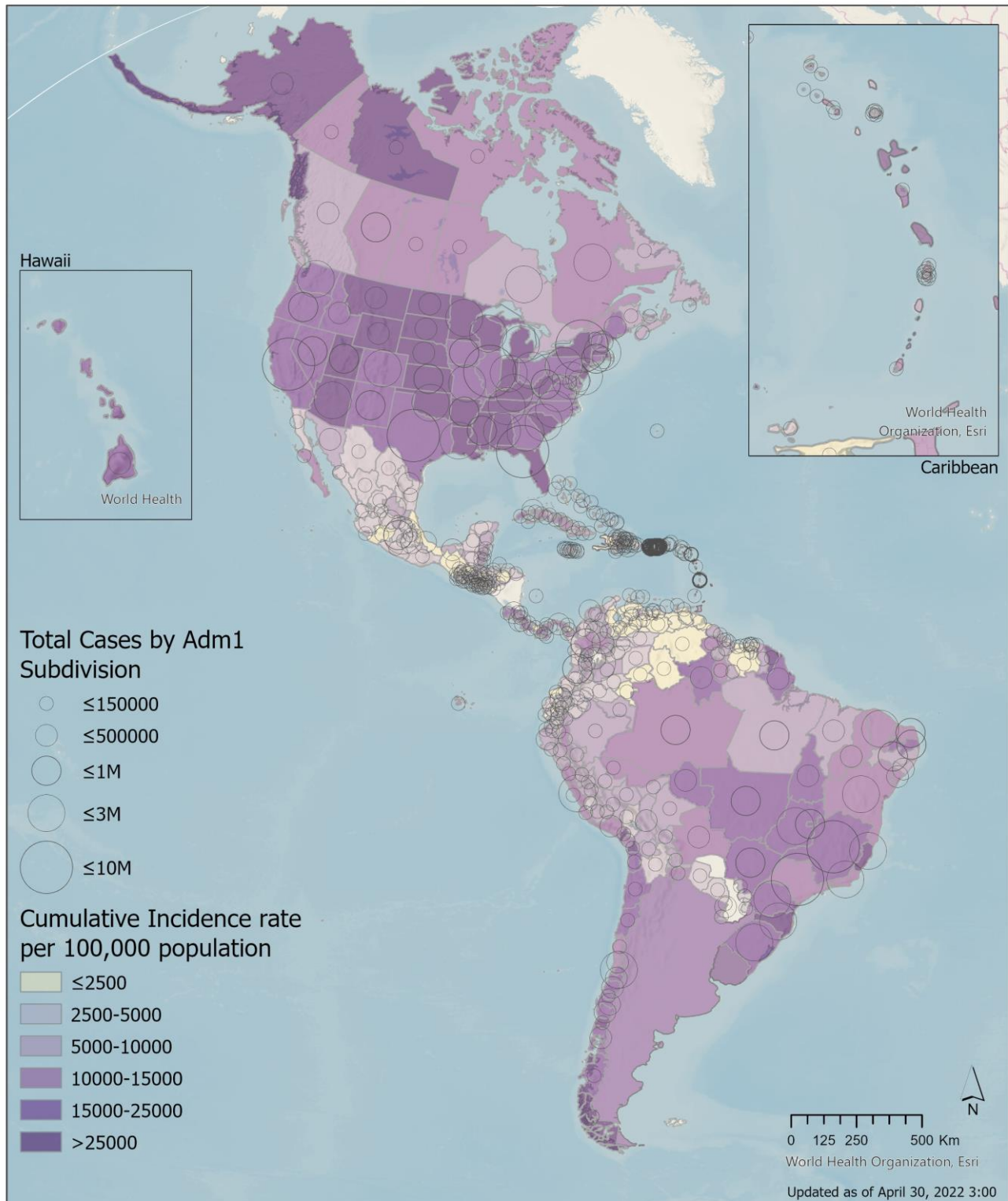
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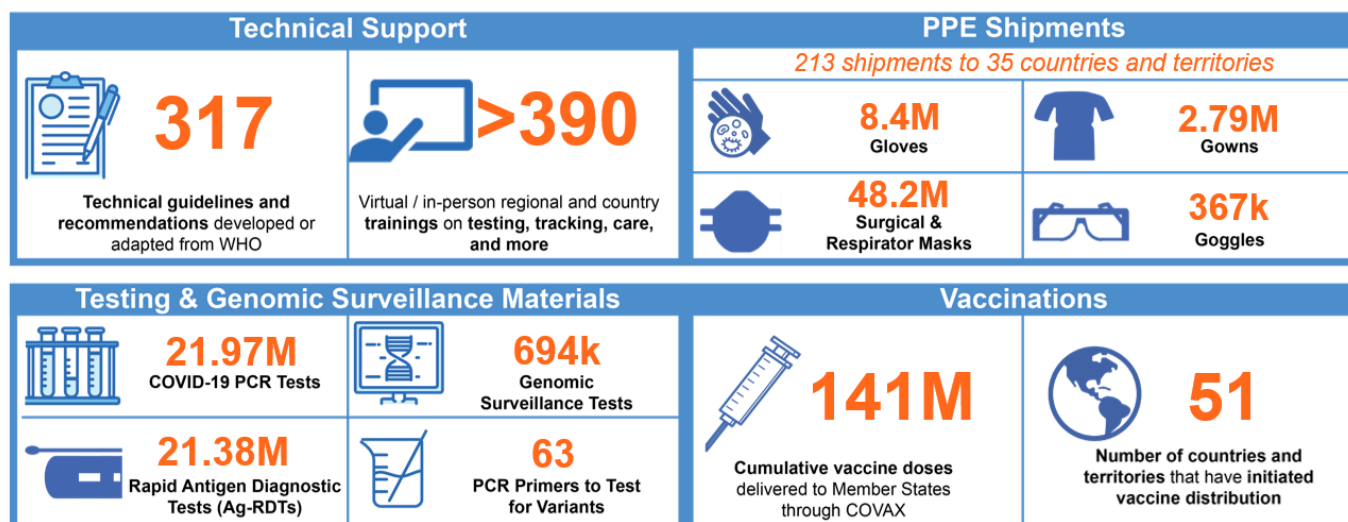


**World Health
Organization**

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 30 April 2022.



PAHO Regional Response Summary



Cumulative regional response data as of 6 May 2022.

PAHO/WHO Response (9 April to 6 May 2022)

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 strategic objectives and core components of the [WHO Strategic Preparedness, Readiness and Response Plan to End the Global COVID-19 Emergency in 2022](#), [PAHO's Response Strategy and Donor Appeal](#), and [PAHO Resolution CD58.R9](#), approved by its Member States. Since then, PAHO 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** on 28 April 2022, **PAHO received a Humanitarian Award**, which is presented to representatives of the country's regional and international agencies and to charitable foundations that generously donated supplies and resources to assist in management and control of COVID-19. The event was attended by the President of Barbados, the Most Honorable Dame Sandra Mason, Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and Dr. Karen Polson, Acting PAHO/WHO Representative for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Countries.



Figure 2: PAHO receives Humanitarian Award for support given to COVID-19 response in Barbados. Credit: PAHO.

In **Brazil**, PAHO deployed a team to the state of Roraima between 12 and 15 April to support the COVID-19 response in the areas of surveillance and health care for immigrants. The team is also working to help strengthen primary health care to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences. The mission resulted in an agreement between PAHO and the State Health Secretariat to implement a Health Situation Room in the municipalities of Bonfim and Rorainópolis to strengthen health surveillance in municipalities located in border areas.

In **Costa Rica**, **PAHO co-hosted a meeting** dedicated to analyzing the role of interinstitutional collaboration in quantitative research on the population's health and its determinants. The event on 22 April 2022 included experts from the Ministry of Health, PAHO, and the University of Costa Rica (UCR). The meeting enabled an exchange of experiences on efforts undertaken during the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, when UCR worked hand in hand with PAHO and the Ministry of Health to analyze the evolution and behavior of the disease. The collaboration involved the analysis and use of mathematical modeling, statistics, and computer tools to assist health authorities in decision-making. Participants also discussed potential future collaboration to generate solutions to the country's main health issues.

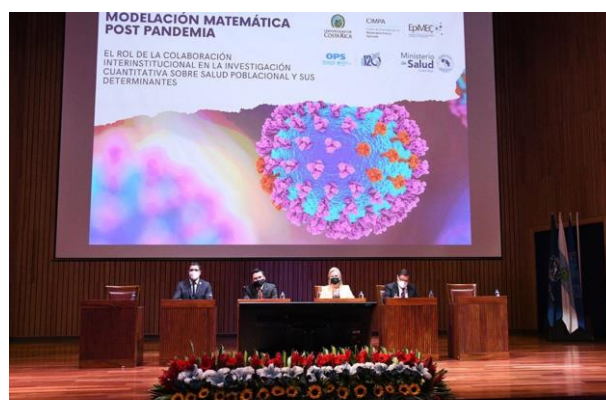


Figure 3: Meeting of experts addresses mathematical modeling to support decision-making in health in Costa Rica. Credit: PAHO.



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](#).

Dr. Etienne delivered two press briefings during this reporting period. On **20 April 2022**, the PAHO Director highlighted that over two-thirds of people in Latin America and the Caribbean have now received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine. However, some countries have yet to reach coverage of half of their populations. Dr. Etienne reported that as of this month, PAHO's Revolving Fund has delivered more than 141 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines in partnership with COVAX and with the support of donors. Nevertheless, while there are now sufficient supplies of COVID-19 vaccine to meet demand everywhere in the Americas, vaccination rates are still uneven. Fewer than 30% of people have completed their primary series of vaccination in Haiti, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Lucia. Across Latin America, Guatemala, Guyana and Paraguay have yet to reach 50% coverage. PAHO is now working with countries to provide technical assistance to vaccination campaigns, as well as planning and communications support to help close the gaps. But individuals also have a role to play. "It's up to all of us to make sure our loved ones are protected," Dr. Etienne said. She also urged countries to integrate COVID-19 vaccination into routine immunization campaigns, noting that the emergency infrastructure set up to get COVID-19 vaccines into arms as quickly as possible should be leveraged to improve routine vaccination uptake. "The COVID vaccination effort has been the largest immunization program in history. It has shown us that success is possible when countries and people work together to embrace vaccines," she added. PAHO's Director emphasized that Vaccination Week in the Americas is an opportunity to celebrate this progress and implement lessons learned to advance coverage and save more lives. Turning to the COVID-19 situation in the region, the Director reported that while the number of COVID-19 infections reported in the Americas dropped by 2.3% this week and continues to decline, cases increased by 11.2% in North America and spiked in the Caribbean. The number of deaths has decreased by 15.2% (to 4,797), showing that vaccines are working well to protect people from hospitalization and death, she noted.

On **4 May 2022**, Dr. Etienne said that the Region of the Americas reported an overall 12.7% increase in COVID-19 cases compared to the previous week, which included increased cases in almost all subregions, and a slight drop of less than 1% in the number of deaths. The Caribbean region reported a 15.4% increase in new infections and a 39.6% increase in deaths, in comparison to the previous week. Cases continued to rise in Central America, with a 53.4% increase this week, even as deaths continued to decline. In North America, both the United States and Canada saw a rise in weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations. Although new infections declined by an overall 8% in South America, seven of the ten regional countries reported increased cases. The PAHO Director warned that COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are rising in far too

many places, which calls for strengthening measures to combat the virus, including surveillance, preparedness, and maintaining adequate testing capacity. Dr. Etienne also stressed that vaccines remain the best way to save lives, urging countries to reach those who remain unvaccinated and ensure access to boosters, especially for the most vulnerable. The Director reported that during Vaccination Week in the Americas, countries and territories in the Region delivered more than 12 million COVID-19 vaccine doses, adding that there must be continuous efforts to reach the 230 million people who remain unvaccinated. On the occasion of International Nurses Day on 6 May, Dr. Etienne acknowledged the essential support provided by nurses, who have helped the Region make important progress and played a central role in caring for those with COVID-19. The Director addressed the pressure on nurses, who have bravely borne the brunt of the pandemic, noting that many of them have struggled with burnout and mental health conditions. Dr. Etienne remarked that nurses are the backbone of the health care workforce, making up 56% of staff in the Americas, and warned that when nurses face difficulties doing their jobs, the entire health system suffers. She also highlighted the launch of PAHO's High-Level Commission on Mental Health and COVID-19. The PAHO Director added that COVID-19 continues to spotlight gaps that must be addressed. "We must grasp this chance to strengthen our health systems and health workforce across the Americas to ensure that we are not only protected from this virus, but can all live happier, healthier lives," she concluded.

Regional

As the communication needs of the Region evolve, PAHO continues to disseminate key messages across multiple platforms and to 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.

Country

In **Belize** on 21 April 2022, PAHO facilitated a three-day training of peer educators as part of preparations for community engagement activities to increase COVID-19 vaccine acceptance in the country.

In **Mexico** from 18 to 21 April 2022, PAHO delivered a virtual training which included participants from the states of Aguascalientes, Durango, and Querétaro, covering risk perception analysis and risk communication. The training was aimed at staff from the states' risk communication laboratories. PAHO also

provided technical support to Mexico's General Directorate of Health Promotion (DGPS) for development of a communications strategy for a COVID-19 vaccination campaign in April and May. Support was provided for production of videoclips on COVID-19 risk perception and communication. The videoclips are intended to highlight the role of the national laboratory in risk communication and capacity-building in state laboratories and are aimed mainly at health professionals.



Figure 4: PAHO staff trains educators on community engagement activities in Belize. Credit: PAHO.



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 with epidemiological data that are updated daily. It has four subregional and 56 country/territory/area geo-hubs for the Americas. In addition, PAHO's [interactive dashboard](#) provides information for the public on cumulative cases, deaths, cumulative incidence rates, 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 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 study designs, sampling methods, sample sizes, and other factors.



PAHO's Contact Tracing Knowledge Hub publishes multidisciplinary information on contact tracing for a variety of audiences, including policy makers, 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 facilitate contact tracing. In collaboration with GOARN, to date, PAHO/WHO has trained health workers in more than 35 countries and territories in the Go.Data app.

Country

In **Argentina** during the reporting period, PAHO participated in a meeting to discuss a strategy for the integration of SARS-CoV-2 surveillance into surveillance of other respiratory viruses. PAHO will provide financial support for implementation of agreed interventions, with special focus on the operation of sentinel units.

In **Brazil** during the week of 9 April 2022, PAHO concluded a training in the Go.Data tool for case monitoring and contact tracing for 50 health professionals from several different technical areas in the Belo Horizonte Secretariat of Health, in the state of Minas Gerais. Sessions covered the main functions of the app and demonstrated how it can be used for other diseases. As a result of the training, Go.Data will be used for COVID-19 monitoring and contact tracing in schools. On 5 and 6 May 2022, a delegation from the Ministry of Health of **Brazil** and PAHO/WHO – composed of the director of the Department of Strategic Articulation in Health Surveillance (MoH), the General Coordinator of Public Health Laboratories (MoH), the PAHO/WHO representative in Brazil, Dr. Socorro Gross, and WHO's COVID-19 technical lead, Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, other health authorities, and technical PAHO staff – was deployed to the state of Rio de Janeiro. During the mission, the delegation made a technical visit to a State Health Care Unit specializing in post-

COVID-19 care to learn about COVID-19 response actions developed by the State Health Secretariat of Rio de Janeiro. Along with the president of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), Dr. Nísia Trindade Lima, and other health authorities, the delegation participated in activities with the International Network for Surveillance of Emerging Pathogens. The activities included visits to the lab and hospital administered by Fiocruz, open debates, and a presentation of the work developed by the network. Among the topics addressed were advances in detection strategies, verification and risk assessment of high-threat pathogens, and increased capacity for genomic surveillance in the country during the COVID-19 emergency.



Figures 5 and 6: PAHO delegation visits Fiocruz in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and participates in activities of the International Network for Surveillance of Emerging Pathogens. Credits: PAHO.



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 points 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.



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 21.97 million reactions/tests and 21.38 million rapid antigen tests. To date, PAHO has provided over 706,700 swabs and 384 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 Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Global genomic surveillance efforts have been essential to identifying and detecting SARS-CoV-2 variants. From the initial identification of SARS-CoV-2 until the period up to 6 May 2022, **98,249** complete genomic sequences from across the Region were shared globally through publicly accessible databases.

5.1 SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern

Given the significant resource requirements needed to sequence all samples in the Region to identify variants, PAHO continues to work closely with laboratories in the Americas to help identify samples that should be prioritized for genomic sequencing. To date, PAHO has distributed **63 unique primers** to detect genetic variants using PCR.

To date, **32 laboratories from 28 countries** are participating in the COVID-19 Genomic Surveillance Regional Network (COVIGEN). Reference sequencing laboratories in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, the United States of America, and Trinidad and Tobago are visible on this [dashboard](#). This network will be critical to track the spread or appearance of new Variants of Concern (VOCs).

Country

In **Brazil** on 4 May 2022, PAHO and the Ministry of Health held the **1st National Exhibition of Experiences of the Public Health Laboratories Network (EXPOLAB)** in Brasilia. The event presented experiences from 27 central laboratories in all Brazilian Federal Units, 13 border laboratories, and three reference laboratory centers. Health officials at the event included the Minister of Health, Dr. Marcelo Queiroga, PAHO's Brazil representative Dr. Gross, and the WHO's COVID-19 technical lead, Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, as well as other health authorities. The aim of the event was to present information on the Brazilian National System of Public Health Laboratories (SISLAB), give visibility to progress made in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and promote the exchange of experiences between professionals and managers of laboratories in the country.



Figure 7: PAHO and MoH of Brazil hold the national event to share experiences of the public health laboratories network. Credit: PAHO.

In **Mexico**, during the week of 25 April 2022, PAHO completed preparatory arrangements to support interventions aimed at strengthening risk communication laboratories and to implement a program on perceptions of the role of communication in the pandemic response. There were also virtual training sessions on establishing risk communications laboratories in the states of Aguascalientes, Durango, Querétaro, and Tlaxcala.

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 supplying PPEs through donations, which are procured through the Revolving Fund, and by training health care personnel.

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

Owing to the breadth of knowledge on 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 receives 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 7 April 2022.

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 6 May 2022, there were at least 33 EMTs deployed throughout the Region, and 53 AMCS, such as military bases, sports stadiums, and fairgrounds managed by PAHO. These EMTs currently add 2,623 inpatient hospital beds and 381 critical care beds throughout the Region.

Country

In **Brazil**, on 14 April and 3 May 2022, PAHO carried out training sessions with health professionals from the Santarém Municipal Health Secretariat and the State Health Secretariat of Pará on clinical management of post COVID-19 conditions. Additional support was given to local health authorities on integrating post COVID-19 services to the local health care network. The support included the design of tools to assist patient reference flows, and assess the progress on mental health care offered in the municipality.

Additionally, from 26 to 29 April 2022, a PAHO team was deployed to the municipality of Laranjal do Jari, in the state of Amapá, **Brazil**, to assess the implementation of post COVID-19 care services and patient flows in the municipality. During the mission, PAHO provided recommendations and guidance on risk communication; infection prevention and control (including COVID-19, other respiratory diseases, zoonosis, and vector-borne diseases); water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); food safety; strengthening mental health care activities; risk mitigation through use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE); laboratory flows; vaccines; COVID-19 testing, and clinical care of respiratory infections.

Also in **Brazil**, on 2 May 2022, PAHO participated in a meeting as part of the support provided to the Technical Group of the Ministry of Health on Influenza and other respiratory viruses for the preparation and review of MoH guidelines. PAHO has been holding periodic meetings with the Group, and this one addressed the criteria and priority groups for the use of nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid) in the management of COVID-19 cases.



Figure 8: PAHO delivers training on clinical management of post COVID-19 conditions in Santarém, Brazil. Credit: PAHO.



Figure 9: Visit to the municipality of Laranjal do Jari, in the state of Amapá, to assess the implementation of post COVID-19 care services. Credit: PAHO.

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 for procurement of goods, supplies, and equipment for the 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.

8.1 PAHO Strategic Fund for Essential Medicines and 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 providing 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 SF leveraged existing long-term agreements and relationships with suppliers to mitigate price inflation and coordinate time-efficient 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 for medicines. Finally, the SF worked with partners to support effective alternative treatment protocols to help adapt to limited supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the start of the pandemic to 6 May 2022, the SF has procured more than **\$298 million** worth of COVID-19 diagnostic tests (PCR and rapid tests), PPE and medicines for critical care, benefiting more than **39 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](#).

Country

In **Argentina** on 21 April 2022, **PAHO delivered to the Ministry of Defense a temporary vaccination module**, as well as water supply and waste management kits worth more than \$700 million. The vaccination module includes five 54-square-meter tents equipped with an electric generator, toilets, sinks, showers, and air conditioning. The two water supply and treatment kits include tanks, water pumps, a portable laboratory, and two integrated waste management kits composed of an incinerator and other equipment. The equipment will strengthen the capacities of the country's EMTs, which are currently deployed in



Figure 10: PAHO visits the province of Santa Fe, Argentina, and delivers medical equipment to support post COVID-19 care in the region. Credit: PAHO.

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.

vaccination operations to support the national COVID-19 immunization program. Donations will also equip EMTs with resources to assist the population during other health emergencies or disasters.

Additionally, on 4 and 5 May 2022, **PAHO visited the province of Santa Fe, Argentina**, as part of efforts to strengthen collaboration and cooperation with the Ministry of Health and other local organizations in the region. PAHO engaged in a number of activities, including visits to the Pharmaceutical Industrial Laboratory (LIF) of Santa Fe and a vaccination clinic. PAHO also participated in the presentation of the mental health plan for the province and in the meeting of a working group dedicated to discussing road safety. The representatives of the Organization also held a meeting with local authorities from the province's International Cooperation and Regional Integration secretariat to explore possibilities for collaboration. Additionally, during the visit, PAHO delivered equipment as part of a project aimed to control quality in X-ray and tomography devices to support the diagnosis of COVID-19 sequelae. The items delivered will enable the calibration of 220 radiodiagnosis devices, improving the quality of diagnosis and safety of health personnel.

In **Jamaica** on 20 April 2022, **PAHO delivered critical medical equipment and laboratory test kits** valued at JM\$40 million to the Ministry of Health to support its COVID-19 response. The donation includes high-flow nasal oxygen devices, oxygen flow meters, pulse oximeters, medicine and emergency trolleys, nebulizers for adults and children, digital blood pressure machines, and electrocardiogram (ECG) cards to support laboratory diagnosis and case management for the critically ill. PAHO resources were also used to procure life-saving equipment for children, including more than 60 child nebulizer kits to help children who develop breathing difficulties after contracting COVID-19 or other respiratory infections, along with computers, tablets and monitors to support the Ministry of Health and Wellness efforts to improve health care service delivery and operations with the use of technology.



Figure 11: PAHO delivers medical equipment to support COVID-19 response in Jamaica. Credit: PAHO.

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) provide invaluable guidance for health authorities in the use of technologies relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are **407 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 Region to share recommendations, considerations, and evaluations of 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 **Bolivia** from 25 to 29 April 2022, PAHO conducted a mission to the region of Chiquitanía as part of a project to strengthen preparedness for wildfires in indigenous and rural communities and enhance inclusive governance of regional health networks in the context of COVID-19. The mission included discussions with health facilities, health networks, and municipal authorities aimed at developing workshops to elaborate a plan for hospital response and a hospital incident command system. These workshops will be carried out in prioritized municipalities of Chiquitanía throughout the month of May 2022.

In **Brazil** from 11 to 13, and 17 to 21 April 2022, a PAHO team was deployed to the state of Santa Catarina to deliver training in the differential diagnosis of COVID-19 and arboviruses and the clinical management of dengue in the context of COVID-19. More than 100 healthcare workers from the microregion of Chapecó were trained, and healthcare flows were developed to be used during the dengue outbreak and COVID-19 pandemic. Since this training program began in March 2022, more than 400 persons have been trained.



Figure 12: PAHO delivers training on the differential diagnostic of COVID-19 and arboviruses and the management of dengue cases in the region of Chapecó, in Brazil. Credit: PAHO.



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 6 May 2022, more than **1,818,431,644 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines** had been administered in the Americas, with more than **696 million people having completed their full vaccination schedule**. **51 countries and territories in the Region have begun vaccination**. 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).

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.

10.1 PAHO's Revolving Fund for the Procurement of Vaccines

Through its [Revolving Fund](#), PAHO has been helping countries prepare to meet COVAX requirements, including by updating market dynamics and financial projections to estimate investment in COVID-19 vaccines; supporting demand planning for routine immunization programs and for procurement of other supplies required for vaccination; participating in international bidding and joint tender with UNICEF; establishing long-term agreements with suppliers to issue price estimates, purchase orders, and requisitions; coordinating and monitoring international logistics; advocating for donations to the Region; and supporting coordination and country readiness.

33 countries have received vaccine doses through COVAX. Overall, as of 6 May 2022, PAHO's Revolving Fund had **distributed more than 141,926,530 million doses** to the Americas through COVAX.

On 6 May 2022, PAHO presented the achievements and new initiatives of the Regional Platform to Advance the Manufacturing of COVID-19 Vaccines and other Health Technologies in the Americas during a [webinar](#) entitled "Strengthen production capacities to improve access to vaccines and other Health Technologies in Latin America and the Caribbean." The Regional

Platform's main goal is to provide a space for discussion and exchange of experiences to identify opportunities for regional cooperation to increase production capacity for medicines and other essential health technologies including vaccines, ultimately contributing to expansion of equitable access to these products in all Member States. Dr. Etienne participated in the event.



Country

In **Argentina** on 11 and 13 April 2022, PAHO delivered training to trainers of a course on the management of COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. The course is being offered by PAHO, in partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH), to health professionals from across the country, mostly dedicated to the Expanded Immunization Program. Technical staff from the National Directorate for the Control of Vaccine-preventable Diseases (DiCEI/MOH) also participated as facilitators of the course.

In **Chile** from 26 to 28 April 2022, PAHO together with the Ministry of Health participated in a mission to the region of Tarapacá to understand the flow of migrants, their access to health care and vaccination in the context of COVID-19. The mission also aimed to identify priorities for current and future cooperation actions in the area.

On 6 May 2022, **PAHO, in cooperation with the governments of Brazil and Guyana, carried out an event to increase vaccination coverage**. Held in Bonfim, a city located on the border between the two countries, the ceremony took place within the framework of the 20th annual Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA), which will be celebrated from 23 to 30 April 2022. The event presented cultural activities from Brazil and Guyana, and was attended by national authorities from both countries.



Figure 13: Collage with highlights of the launch event of the Vaccination Week in the Americas with the governments of Brazil and Guyana. Credit: PAHO.



Figure 14: PAHO delivers COVID-19 vaccines donated through COVAX to Honduras. Credit: PAHO.

In **Honduras** on 6 May 2022, **PAHO delivered 250,380 Pfizer vaccines** against COVID-19 donated through the COVAX Mechanism. The country has already received more than 5.3 million doses through the mechanism so far. These doses will be used to strengthen vaccine coverage in the country and ensure immunization of the most vulnerable.

Vaccination Week in the Americas

Besides increasing the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines, the initiative also aimed to expand routine immunization, which has significantly decreased as an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Region. Preliminary results show that 12 million COVID-19 vaccine doses were administered throughout the Americas during the week. **Highlights of VWA activities in the Region:** [Argentina](#) | [Colombia](#) | [Honduras](#) | [Panamá](#) | [Peru](#) | [Uruguay](#) | [the Amazon Region: Brazil, Colombia and Peru](#).