

WEBINAR SERIES ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WITH A TERRITORIAL PERSPECTIVE



SEMINAR #2. Financing primary care and integrated health care: challenges and opportunities

Executive summary

MAIN PRESENTATIONS

The second webinar in the series on [Primary Health Care \(PHC\) with a territorial perspective](#) took place on May 22, 2024, to share experiences and identify challenges in the financing of PHC and analyzing the prioritization of PHC in public spending in countries of the Americas. It featured two introductory presentations: the first on the performance of health budgets at the regional level and the second on a country case study on investment in PHC.

688 participants

51 countries and territories



Claudia Pescetto, Advisor, Health Economy and Financing, PAHO/WHO

The discussion began with the presentation of the publication [Analysis of the budgetary performance of the health sector in the period 2019-2021](#). This study, which includes eight countries in the region, analyses the degree of alignment between the need to prioritize the first level of care (FLC) with the budgetary performance in health and the health sector's absorption capacity of the increase in financial resources in the critical years of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study is the first attempt to generate evidence on prioritizing the first level of care as a fundamental pillar of the PHC strategy. Among the main messages is the importance of strengthening the capacity of the resource execution system through better strategic planning.

Hernán Rodríguez, Advisor on health systems and services, PAHO/WHO Peru

Presented the results of a study on prioritization of investment in PHC in Peru. The study, which will be published soon, analyzes the increase in financing for the first level of care in the government and social security subsystems between 2019 and 2022. The analysis addresses the sources of resources and the execution levels of Peru's first level of care for the various subsystems (national government, regional government, social security, military health, and police health). As a result, it is observed that there has been an increase in the percentage of spending dedicated to the PNA compared to the pre-pandemic period. In the case of the social security system, the percentage of spending on the PNA remained stable in 2019 – 2022.





Sebastian Bauhoff, Senior Health Economist at the Inter-American Development Bank



Cristian Herrera, Senior Health Specialist in the Latin America and Caribbean Region at the World Bank

Connecting this discussion with the challenges of achieving resilience in health systems, guests from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank (WB) joined the discussion. These institutions and PAHO have recently formed the [Alliance for Primary Health Care in the Americas \(A4PHC\)](#). For the IDB representative, health spending in the region is low and needs improvement. He acknowledged, however, that the trend shows that health spending has been more efficient in recent years. Among the aspects to be improved are the prioritization and the criteria for allocating resources to increase cost-effectiveness in health. As proposals, emphasis was placed on allocating more resources to primary care, increasing the use of generic drugs, and improving the quality of care. The WB guest said it is necessary to know how much is spent on PHC effectively and standardize how it is measured. About the resilience of health systems, he explained that the new roles that PHC should have for the resilience of the systems must be identified, emergency financing mechanisms must be available, and the risks of emergencies must be known at the territorial level to establish the appropriate incentives.

COUNTRIES EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES



Ximena Barros, Coordinator of the Universal APS Financing Committee of the Ministry of Health of Chile

The new government is implementing the universalization project of the PHC with the aim of allowing private insurance users to access the PHC benefits and to make changes in the financing model of the last 30 years. The pilot has allowed an increase in fiscal resources for the municipalities, an increase in the hours of attention, a greater provision of human resources, and an increase in the number of people enrolled in the first level of care facilities.



Brenda Morales, Planning and Evaluation Unit of the Ministry of Health of Honduras

The government has a Health System Refoundation Plan 2024-2030 and a Strategy to Strengthen Integrated Health Networks based on PHC, which will allow it to reorient the financing strategy in the coming years.



Osvaldo Brites and Susana Cabrera, Planning and PHC Department of the Ministry of Health of Paraguay

The government has a health policy for 2015-2030 aimed at achieving universal health coverage, and the budget for primary health care in the Ministry of Health has increased by 30% since 2009. They highlighted that to expand the capacities of the PNA, Paraguay has support from development banks to enable more primary care units, noting that there are challenges to improve the use of resources since, in the last five years, the level of budget execution has been approximately 85%.

The **challenges highlighted by the countries for the coming years** are to evaluate the combination of capitation as a payment system with other mechanisms, invest more in tertiary and secondary prevention due to the future increase in morbidity and mortality, increase the number of primary care units, and promote the operation of integrated health networks.

The panelists offered a regional perspective on the efficiency of health spending and increased investment to achieve more resilient health systems prepared to face adverse contexts such as the COVID-19 pandemic. These comments are closely related to the guidelines in the [Strategy for Establishing Resilient Health Systems](#) approved by PAHO/WHO Member States in 2022.

KEY MESSAGES

- There is growing interest in understanding the levels of expenditure and best practices in the execution of primary care at the first level as a Primary Health Care (PHC) strategy.
- The implementation of policies that promote efficiency and the achievement of results in the health sector requires greater investments in the first level of care and PHC, increasing the quality of health care, managing health costs and increasing the value in health for the resources invested.
- It is important that PHC policies not only focus on increasing investment in health, but on an effective execution of health resources that corresponds to the objectives of strategic health planning, raising the levels of budget execution and health financing in emergency contexts.

To view the full recording and access the seminar materials, [click here](#).



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